

ADB



# Knowledge Solutions

Tools, Methods, and Approaches  
to Drive Development Forward  
and Enhance Its Effects

Olivier Serrat

Asian Development Bank

# Knowledge Solutions

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**TOOLS, METHODS, AND APPROACHES TO DRIVE  
DEVELOPMENT FORWARD AND ENHANCE ITS EFFECTS**

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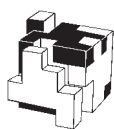
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# Foreword

Competence is the state or quality of being adequately or well qualified to deliver a specific task, action, or function successfully. (It is also a specific range of knowledge, skills, or behaviors used to improve performance.) Core competencies are integrated and harmonized abilities that provide potential access to markets; create and deliver value to clients, audiences, and partners there; and are difficult for competitors to imitate.

Today, sustainable competitive advantage derives from strenuous efforts to identify, cultivate, and exploit an organization's core competencies. This calls for relentless design of strategic architecture, deployment of competence carriers, and commitment to collaborate across silos. Put simply, core competencies are the product of collective learning: their tangible fruits are composite packages of products and services that anticipate and meet demand.

Knowledge is what you learn from experience before, during, and after the event. Since it is both a thing and a flow, the best way to manage knowledge is to cater at all times to the environment in which it can be identified, created, stored, shared, and used. Tools, methods, and approaches are needed to enable that.

And so, to drive development forward and enhance its effects, the Asian Development Bank has, since 2008, published the *Knowledge Solutions* series, available at [www.adb.org/knowledgesolutions](http://www.adb.org/knowledgesolutions). It aims to build competencies in the areas of strategy development, management techniques, collaboration mechanisms, knowledge sharing and learning, and knowledge capture and storage—all of which are essential to high-performance organizations.

The Regional and Sustainable Development Department in ADB works to promote quality, knowledge, and innovation for inclusive and sustainable development, and I am delighted to sign the foreword of this compendium of *Knowledge Solutions*. Olivier Serrat, head of the Knowledge Management Center in the department, authored almost all the articles. The authors of or contributors to others are acknowledged with thanks in the text. I am confident that the *Knowledge Solutions* will be relevant and find applicability in numerous sectors, themes, and disciplines in development work but also outside it.



Xianbin Yao  
Director General  
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# About the Author

Olivier Serrat is principal knowledge management specialist in the Regional and Sustainable Development Department of the Asian Development Bank, and concurrent head of ADB's Knowledge Management Center. He is the focal point for implementing and monitoring the progress of ADB's knowledge management framework, and is responsible for overseeing the development and delivery of ADB's knowledge management agenda. In 2010, Olivier produced *ADB: Reflections and Beyond*, an archive of the memories and experiences of ADB personnel of all levels, both past and present. His recent publications include *Learning for Change in ADB* (2009), *Auditing the Lessons Architecture* (2008), *Learning Lessons in ADB* (2007), and *Independent Evaluation at the Asian Development Bank* (2007).

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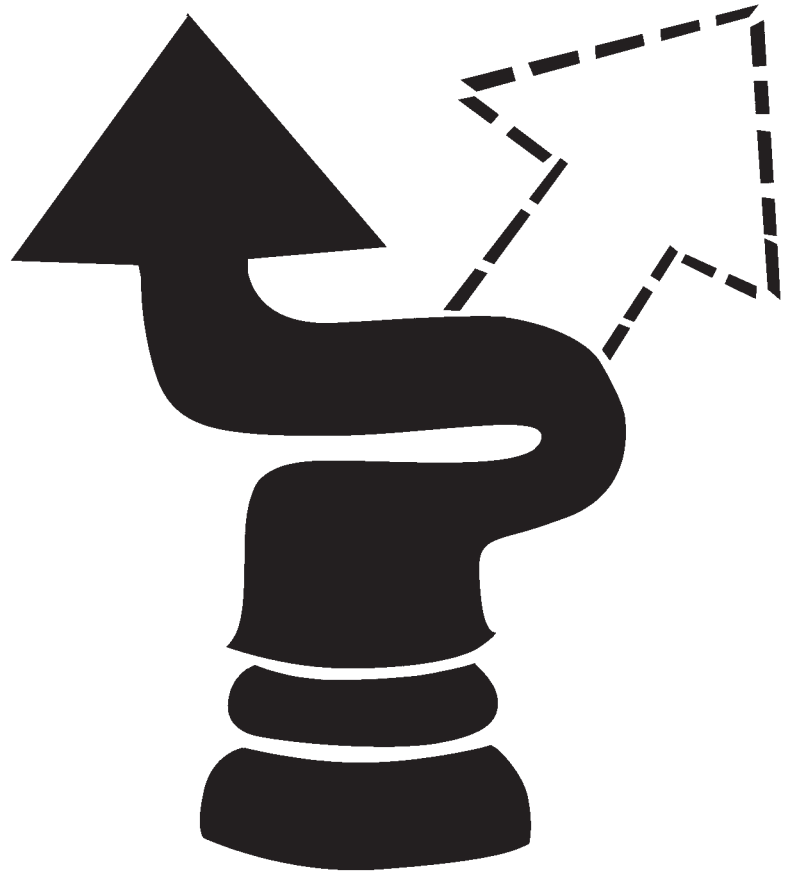
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# Strategy Development

# Auditing Knowledge

Knowledge audits help organizations identify their knowledge-based assets and develop strategies to manage them.



## DEFINITION

Developing a knowledge-sharing culture is a change process on the way to better organizational performance. To achieve that change, an organization needs a vision of where it wants to be and an accurate picture of where it is now—that is, its current reality. A knowledge audit is one way of taking that picture.

What is a knowledge audit? The traditional concept of an audit is an evaluation of a person, business, system, process, project, or product by an independent third party. Financial audits are well understood. They examine the financial statements of a company to check performance against standards. A knowledge audit works differently, and some demystification is called for. It is by and large—granted differing objects, breadth of coverage, and levels of sophistication—a qualitative review (or inventory, survey, check) of an organization's knowledge health at both the macro and micro levels. The defining feature of a knowledge audit is that it places people at the center of concerns: it purports to find out what people know, and what they do with the knowledge they have. It can be described as an investigation of the knowledge needs of an organization and the interconnectivity among leadership, organization, technology, and learning in meeting these. Put in a different way, a knowledge audit is an investigation of the strengths and weaknesses of an organization's knowledge, and of the opportunities and threats that face it.

## PURPOSE

A knowledge audit can have multiple purposes, but the most common is to provide tangible evidence of what knowledge an organization needs, where that knowledge is, how it is being used, what problems and difficulties exist, and what improvements can be made. Although there can be no blueprint,

a typical knowledge audit will—not necessarily at the same time or level of detail<sup>1</sup>—query the following:

- What are an organization's knowledge needs?
- What tacit and explicit knowledge assets does it have and where are they?
- How does knowledge flow within the organization, formally and informally, and to and from clients and relevant organizations?
- How is that knowledge identified, created, stored, shared, and used?
- What obstacles are there to knowledge flows, e.g., to what extent do its people, business processes, and technology currently support or hamper the effective movement of knowledge?
- What gaps and duplications exist in the organization's knowledge?

## DELIVERABLES

Deliverables from knowledge audits are multiple, and can impact organizational performance and the individuals and groups associated severally with it. Not all can be quantified. Regardless, to be of any use, benefits cannot just be shown; they must be realized. Specifically, depending on its thrust and coverage, a knowledge audit can be expected to

- help the organization identify what knowledge is needed to reach its goals and support individual and group activities;
- recognize the knowledge created and help assess its value and contribution to organizational performance, thus making it more measurable and accountable;
- give tangible evidence of the extent to which knowledge is being effectively managed and indicate where changes for the better should be made;

<sup>1</sup> The audit could span the whole organization, but preferably cover constituent parts of it. For the same reason that opinion polls do not sample the entire population, marginal returns diminish as the scale of related exercises increases. The same consideration applies to the number of questions that might be posed.

- identify intellectual assets and facilitate the creation of an intellectual asset register;
- distinguish pockets of knowledge that are not being used to good advantage and therefore offer untapped potential;
- review the use of external knowledge and suggest ways in which it might be used to better effect;
- assess the use and effectiveness of knowledge products such as flagship publications, how valuable they are, and how they might be improved;
- circumscribe knowledge flows and current bottlenecks within those flows;
- make out present and future knowledge gaps;
- develop knowledge and social network maps of the organization;
- supply data and information for the development of knowledge management initiatives that are directly relevant to the organization's specific knowledge needs and current situation; and
- pinpoint quick wins that could be implemented easily to produce clear, tangible, and immediate benefits.<sup>2</sup>

Knowledge audits might be small and discreet. But they must all give a clear direction regarding what can be achieved and must engender a realistic expectation of what might then be done with requisite resources. They must also create active interest and highlight important facts to management. They will work best if their original purpose is discussed in some detail before the audit begins. Reporting may be done both through short written reports, presentations to managers—preferably one at the divisional level and another at the departmental level—and collation of detailed results for later use.

## CONSTITUENTS OF KNOWLEDGE AUDITS

The typical constituents of knowledge audits, each of which can be conducted at different levels of complexity using a variety of tools,<sup>3</sup> are shown in the figure.<sup>4</sup> They are preferably, but not necessarily, in order: knowledge needs analysis, knowledge inventory analysis, knowledge flow analysis, and knowledge mapping. Throughout investigations, elements of knowledge, relationships, context, and external environment should be borne in mind, together with the fact that about 80% of an organization's knowledge is tacit—the greatest challenge lies in the audit of that.

- **Identify Knowledge Needs.** The objective of knowledge needs analysis is to identify what tacit and explicit knowledge individuals, groups, and the organization possess; and what knowledge they might require in the future to perform better. The analysis can help an organization develop strategy. Besides shining light on bread-and-butter wants, it can also draw attention to staff skills and competency enhancement needs; opportunities for staff learning and development; organizational culture practices concerning leadership, collaboration, team work, and the performance management and rewards system; and staff relationship with management, peers, and subordinates.
- **Draw Up a Knowledge Inventory.** Knowledge inventory analysis is stock-taking to identify, locate, and document existing knowledge assets. It involves, to the extent possible, counting, indexing, and categorizing tacit and explicit knowledge. For explicit knowledge, the analysis might cover numbers, types, and categories of documents, databases, libraries, intranets, hyperlinks, and subscriptions

**Figure: Knowledge Audit Constituents**



Source: Author.

<sup>2</sup> Benefits can come in a range of forms and need not represent a radical overthrow of organizational structures and systems. They can include smoother induction of new employees; insights for coaching, mentoring, and training; more congenial working relationships between people across the organization; a more positive working environment; improved use of internal and external knowledge products and services; easier retrieval of data, information, and knowledge across the organization; enhanced quality and consistency of data, information, and knowledge; fewer obstacles to knowledge sharing; more efficient work processes; superior work flows; higher quality client service delivery; and better transfer of knowledge from departing employees to successors or replacements.

<sup>3</sup> The common tools used for knowledge audits are face-to-face and telephone interviews; structured, semi-structured, and unstructured questionnaires; workshops; focus group discussions; and online consultations. Other data and information can be gathered by referring to the documentation of the organization, conducting direct inspections, and examining the information and communications technology infrastructure, including the organization's website.

<sup>4</sup> Naturally, in a large and diverse organization, the dimensions and conduct of a knowledge audit will differ radically from that applicable to a small, less complex one.

to external knowledge resources; knowledge locations in the organization and in its systems; the organization and access of knowledge; the purpose, relevance, and quality of knowledge; and use of knowledge. For tacit knowledge, the analysis might relate to staff directories and academic and professional qualifications, skills and core competency levels and experience, staff learning and development opportunities, and leadership potential in employees. An organization will be able to identify knowledge gaps and areas of duplication by comparing the results of the knowledge inventory analysis with those of the knowledge needs analysis.

- **Analyze Knowledge Flows.** Knowledge flow analysis investigates how knowledge moves from where it is to where it is needed in an organization, revealing good and bad practices. The analysis determines how employees find the knowledge they must have, and how they share what knowledge they have. Knowledge flow analysis should examine people, business processes, and technology. Regarding people, this entails exploring attitudes toward—and experiences, beliefs, values, and skills in—knowledge sharing. In relation to business processes, one should look at how people go about their daily business and the extent to which identification, creation, storage, sharing, and use of knowledge forms part of that; policies and practices

concerning knowledge flows, for instance, on data and information handling, management of records, or web publishing. For technology, there should be a focus on information and communications technology infrastructure, such as portals, content management, accessibility and ease of use, and current levels of usage.

- **Create Knowledge Maps.** Knowledge maps—whether they are real, Yellow Pages, or specially constructed databases—are communication media designed to help visualize the sources, flows, constraints, and sinks (losses or stopping points) of knowledge within an organization. They can specify, for instance, creators, critics, collectors, connectors, and users of knowledge. They are useful navigational guides to tacit and explicit knowledge and underscore importance, relationships, and dynamics, for example, within social networks. They can flip perspectives on knowledge from bottom-up to top-down, and focus knowledge management initiatives on the highest potential opportunities. ■

## FURTHER READING

ADB. 2008. *Auditing the Lessons Architecture*. Manila.

Available: [www.adb.org/documents/studies/auditing-lessons-architecture/in371-07.asp](http://www.adb.org/documents/studies/auditing-lessons-architecture/in371-07.asp)



### STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT

A strategy is a long-term plan of action designed to achieve a particular goal.

# Building a Learning Organization

Learning is the key to success—some would even say survival—in today’s organizations. Knowledge should be continuously enriched through both internal and external learning. For this to happen, it is necessary to support and energize organization, people, knowledge, and technology for learning.



## THE LEARNING ORGANIZATION MODEL

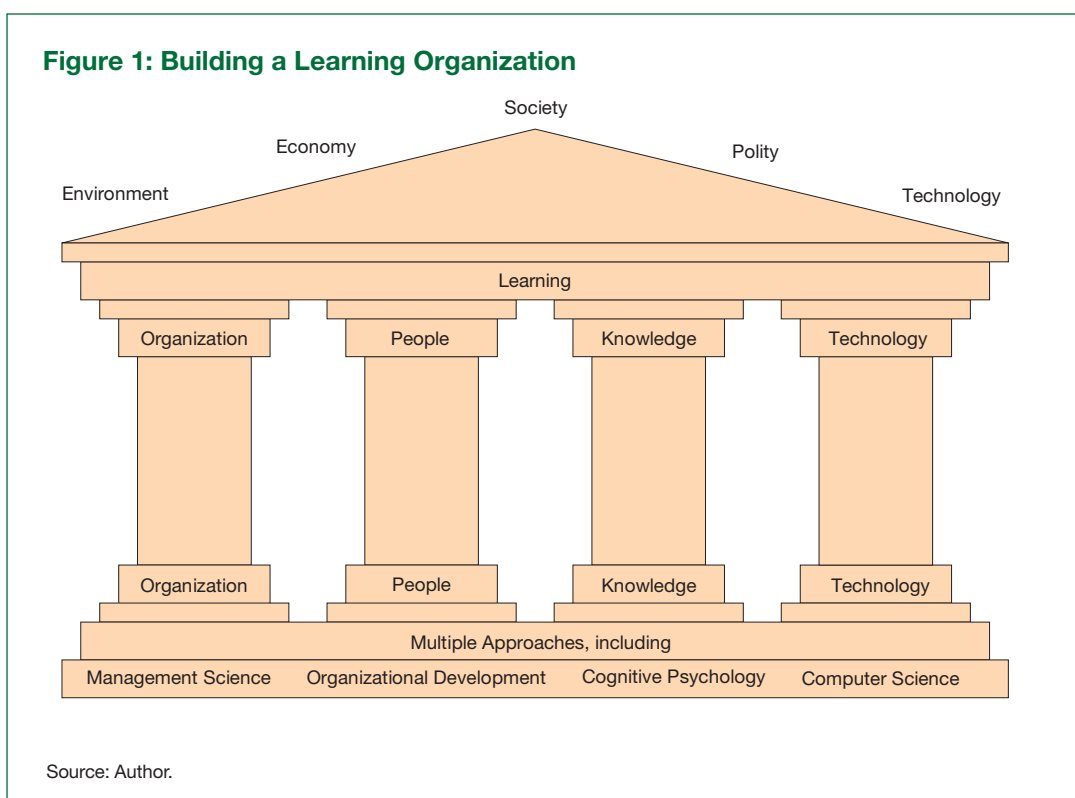
For organizations wishing to remain relevant and thrive, learning better and faster is critically important. Many organizations apply quick and easy fixes often driven by technology. Most are futile attempts to create organizational change. However, organizational learning is neither possible nor sustainable without understanding what drives it. The figure below shows the subsystems of a learning organization: organization, people, knowledge, and technology. Each subsystem supports the others in magnifying the learning as it permeates across the system.

## ORGANIZATION

A learning organization values the role that learning can play in developing organizational effectiveness. It demonstrates this by having an inspiring vision for learning and a learning strategy that will support the organization in achieving its vision.

**“It is not the strongest of the species who survive, nor the most intelligent; rather it is those most responsive to change.”**

— Charles Darwin





The leadership of a learning organization is committed to the importance of learning and clearly communicates that learning is critical to organizational success. The leadership recognizes the importance of providing the motive, means, and opportunity for learning: (i) the motive being the “why?”—the purpose and reason for learning; (ii) the means being the “how and what?”—the models, methods, and competencies required; and (iii) the opportunity being the “where and when?”—the spaces for learning. Leaders take an exemplary leading role in creating and sustaining a supportive learning culture.

The structure of a learning organization takes into account the common obstacles to learning so it is carefully aligned with strategy, avoiding the development of “silos” and minimizing unnecessary levels of hierarchy.

**“The supreme accomplishment is to blur the line between work and play.”**

—Arnold Toynbee

Communication systems are used to facilitate the lateral transfer of information and knowledge across formal structural boundaries. In decentralized and geographically spread organizations, particular care is taken to use communication to encourage lateral communication and to overcome the increased danger of the development of “silos.”

Adequate resources are allocated for learning in terms of time, space, specialist support staff, and budgets for knowledge management and learning infrastructure, formal and informal communities of practice<sup>1</sup> and other value networks (both internal and external),<sup>2</sup> and learning and development programs. Support to communities of practice, for example, is extended in a structured manner throughout their life cycle.<sup>3</sup>

To stimulate creativity and generate new insights and innovative practices, a learning organization takes a balanced approach to the importance of both planned and emergent learning. Planned learning is addressed through the careful development of strategy, structure, systems, procedures, and plans. In a learning organization, planning is based on careful reflection through probing questions that draw on data and information from monitoring, review, and self- and independent evaluation.

Emergent learning is equally important but takes an inherently more speculative and opportunistic approach. It is dependent on encouraging a passion for learning and

knowledge sharing among staff members, developing learning competencies, creating opportunities for informal sharing, and cultivating a supportive learning culture.

**“I have no special talents. I am only passionately curious.”**

—Albert Einstein

Failures and unintended outcomes are the focus of constructive discussions leading to new approaches. When such incidents involve clients, care is taken to protect their reputation.

## PEOPLE

A learning organization needs people who are intellectually curious about their work, who actively reflect on their experience, who develop experience-based theories of change and continuously test these in practice with colleagues, and who use their understanding and initiative to contribute to knowledge development. In short, it needs people who are reflective practitioners. Reflective practitioners understand their strengths and limitations and have a range of tools, methods, and approaches for knowledge management and learning, individually and in collaboration with others.



Reflective practice flourishes when people experience a high level of psychological safety and trust, and it is undermined when people feel exposed to unfair negative criticism and when they believe that they cannot rely on colleagues. Teamwork is, therefore, a vital ingredient of a genuine learning organization. Indeed, one characteristic of teams in learning organizations is that they operate as learning communities in which sensitively expressed dissent, conflict, and debate

<sup>1</sup> Communities of practice emerge in the social space between project teams and knowledge networks. They are groups of like-minded, interacting people who filter, analyze, invest and provide, convene, build, and learn and facilitate to ensure more effective creation and sharing of knowledge in their domain. What they know, who they are, and what they do define them.

<sup>2</sup> A value network is any web of relationships that generates both tangible and intangible value through complex dynamic exchanges. Value networks include communities of practice, knowledge networks, and networks of practice. Their growing importance requires that organizations pay more attention to their forms and functions, evolve principles of engagement, circumscribe and promote success factors, and monitor and evaluate performance with knowledge performance metrics.

<sup>3</sup> The five stages of community development are potential, coalescing, maturing, stewardship, and transformation.

are encouraged as positive sources of learning. Developing the safety and trust on which reflective practice and positive teamwork depend requires careful attention to relationship building and the management of individual and collective performance.

To grow and protect the investment made in staff members, a learning organization pays careful attention to developing and retaining its people. Closely linked to development and retention of staff members are the importance of recognition and incentives for learning. Learning organizations ensure that time and effort spent on effective knowledge management and learning are recognized as core activities in the organization's time and performance management systems. Rewards for contributing to learning and knowledge development can be more conventional (e.g., career advancement, increased income, and greater formal status) or may be less conventional (e.g., informal peer status, time made available for study, or public acknowledgment for an innovative contribution made).

Learning organizations also provide a wide range of opportunities for individual and collective learning and development. Learning and development programs are available to ensure that individuals and teams develop the competencies of reflective practice and collaborative learning.

While learning and development systems may focus on more formal programs, a learning organization is one where the maximum benefit is also leveraged from other learning opportunities such as day-to-day work experiences, team meetings, short-term secondments, and membership of task groups.

In a learning organization, an important source of individual learning and development is coaching and mentoring support from managers, specialists, and other experienced colleagues. High-quality coaching and mentoring can help reflective practice flourish. However, both involve skills that cannot be taken for granted and must be consciously developed in the organization. It cannot be assumed that good contract managers and technical specialists automatically make good coaches and mentors.

Learning organizations require and encourage the development of leadership competencies at all levels in the organizational hierarchy, not just at the top. Leadership is viewed as a valuable skill that is based on the possession of expertise and knowledge, not simply positional status.

## KNOWLEDGE

Knowledge is a critical asset in every learning organization. Because learning is both a product of knowledge and its source,

### Box 1: Knowledge Solutions<sup>a</sup>

<b>Strategy Development</b> Overcoming Roadblocks to Learning Social Network Analysis The Most Significant Change Technique Culture Theory Outcome Mapping The Sustainable Livelihoods Approach Auditing Knowledge Reading the Future Creating and Running Partnerships Linking Research to Practice		<b>Management Techniques</b> Growing Managers, Not Bosses Managing by Walking Around Conducting Effective Meetings The SCAMPER Technique The Five Whys Technique Picking Investments in Knowledge Management The Reframing Matrix Notions of Knowledge Management Focusing on Project Metrics Managing Knowledge Workers Output Accomplishment and the Design and Monitoring Framework
<b>Collaboration Mechanisms</b> Collaborating with Wikis Drawing Mind Maps Working in Teams Appreciative Inquiry Action Learning Sets Building Communities of Practice	<b>Knowledge Sharing and Learning</b> Learning from Evaluation Disseminating Knowledge Products Dimensions of the Learning Organization Building Networks of Practice Conducting Effective Presentations Conducting Successful Retreats Identifying and Sharing Good Practices Storytelling Posting Research Online Using Plain English Conducting After-Action Reviews and Retrospects Conducting Peer Assists	<b>Knowledge Capture and Storage</b> Glossary of Knowledge Management Writing Weblogs Staff Profile Pages Assessing the Effectiveness of Assistance in Capacity Development Monthly Progress Notes Conducting Exit Interviews

<sup>a</sup> Tools, methods, and approaches available as of May 2009.

Source: ADB. 2008–. *Knowledge Solutions*. Manila. Available: [www.adb.org/knowledgesolutions](http://www.adb.org/knowledgesolutions)

a learning organization recognizes that the two are inextricably linked and manages them accordingly.

The units of knowledge production are both the individual and the collective. Learning organizations understand that while knowledge is created in the minds of individuals, knowledge development thrives in a rich web of social contact among individuals, groups, and organizations. A learning organization provides creative opportunities for this knowledge to be developed and shared with others through interpersonal contact and access to documentation.

An organization's main repositories of knowledge are the design and delivery of its products and services and the strategies, systems, and procedures it has developed to guide its decision making. Learning organizations know how best to take a learning approach to the development of this embedded knowledge by putting in place the necessary systems and infrastructure for knowledge management.<sup>4</sup>

Feedback is the dynamic process of presenting and disseminating information to improve performance. Feedback mechanisms are increasingly being recognized as key elements of learning. Key (and often underutilized) sources of knowledge in organizations are the data and information that emerge from monitoring systems and the analyses, conclusions, and recommendations that arise from self- and independent evaluations. Learning organizations have sophisticated ways of designing evaluations with learning (as well as accountability) in mind. Methods, such as after-action reviews and retrospects,<sup>5</sup> are successfully adopted and generate lessons that are carefully targeted at specific audiences. Learning organizations have systems that ensure that the outputs of self- and independent evaluations are made widely available, used to question orthodox thinking, and trigger creativity and innovation. Most significant changes are collected, systematically selected, and interpreted.<sup>6</sup> Peer assists,<sup>7</sup> drawing on individuals' expertise and documented lessons learned, are used in planning new initiatives to reduce the likelihood of repeated unintended negative outcomes. Action learning is used to tackle more intractable challenges.<sup>8</sup>

A learning organization recognizes the importance of a resilient organizational memory. Learning organizations

ensure that individuals and teams are encouraged to use a range of ways of surfacing their tacit knowledge and making it available to others through carefully targeted documentation and collaborative working practices. Recognizing that organizations change in the direction in which they inquire, they leverage the powers of appreciative inquiry.<sup>9</sup> Documentation is made accessible to others in the organization with a range of user-friendly information and communication technologies.

**“Knowledge is the true organ of sight, not the eyes.”**

—The Panchatantra

Learning organizations are networked with the wider world. They know how to create and run partnerships.<sup>10</sup> Collaborative mutual learning arrangements with other organizations are common and fruitful.

## TECHNOLOGY

Learning organizations know how to harness the power of information and communication technologies—without these technologies constraining knowledge management and learning. In a learning organization, information and communication technologies are used, among other purposes, to strengthen organizational identity; build and sustain learning communities; keep staff members, clients, and others informed and aware of corporate developments; create unexpected, helpful connections between people and provide access to their knowledge and ideas; encourage innovation and creativity; share and learn from good practices<sup>11</sup> and unintended outcomes; strengthen relationships; develop and access organizational memory; share tools, methods, and approaches; celebrate successes; identify internal sources of expertise; and connect with the outside world.

The creative use of information and communication technologies—such as shared document drives, intranet pages, online communities and networks, wikis and other

<sup>4</sup> See, for example, ADB. 2008–. *Knowledge Showcase*. Manila: ADB. Available: [www.adb.org/knowledgeshowcases/default.asp](http://www.adb.org/knowledgeshowcases/default.asp)

<sup>5</sup> Organizational learning calls for nonstop assessment of performance—its successes and failures. This ensures that learning takes place and supports continuous improvement. After-action reviews and retrospects are tools that facilitate assessments by bringing together a team to discuss an activity or project openly and honestly.

<sup>6</sup> The most significant change technique helps monitor and evaluate the performance of projects and programs. It involves the collection and systematic participatory interpretation of stories of significant change emanating from the field—stories about who did what, when, and why, and the reasons the event was important. It does not employ quantitative indicators.

<sup>7</sup> Peer assists are events that bring individuals together to share their experiences, insights, and knowledge on an identified challenge or problem. They also promote collective learning and develop networks among those invited.

<sup>8</sup> Action learning is a structured method that enables small groups to work regularly and collectively on complicated problems, take action, and learn as individuals and as a team while doing so.

<sup>9</sup> Appreciative inquiry is the process of facilitating positive change in organizations. Its basic assumption is uncomplicated: every organization has something that works well. Appreciative inquiry is therefore an exciting generative approach to organizational development. At a higher level, it is also a way of being and seeing.

<sup>10</sup> In development work as elsewhere, partnerships have a crucial role to play. To reach the critical mass required to reduce poverty, there must be more concerted effort, greater collaboration, alignment of inputs, and a leveraging of resources and effort. Understanding the drivers of success and the drivers of failure helps efforts to create and run them.

<sup>11</sup> Good practice is a process or methodology that has been shown to be effective in one part of the organization and might be effective in another.

**“This is perhaps the most beautiful time in human history; it is really pregnant with all kinds of creative possibilities made possible by science and technology which now constitute the slave of man—if man is not enslaved by it.”**

—Jonas Salk

collaborative work spaces, blogging and online storytelling,<sup>12</sup> staff profile pages,<sup>13</sup> online webinars, podcasts, and social network analysis<sup>14</sup>—indicates that an organization takes learning seriously.

Finally, in a learning organization, sufficient opportunities are provided for staff members to learn how to make use of available information and communication technologies for knowledge management and learning. Box 2 offers a structured questionnaire with which to gauge perceptions of competencies to learn for change. ■

## Box 2: Seeking Feedback on Learning for Change<sup>a</sup>

### Organization

- There is an inspiring vision for learning and an organizational learning strategy that clearly communicates that learning is critical to organizational success.
- Leaders take an exemplary leading role in creating and sustaining a supportive learning culture.
- The formal organizational structure facilitates learning, adaptation, and change.
- Sanctioned informal organizational structures enable and encourage learning across formal structural boundaries.
- Good use is made of communication systems to facilitate the lateral transfer of information and knowledge and to minimize the development of “silos.”
- Adequate resources are allocated for learning in terms of time allocation, specialist support staff, budgets for knowledge management infrastructure, formal and informal communities of practice and other value networks, and learning and development programs.
- A balanced approach to learning that recognizes the importance of both planned and emergent learning is taken.
- Planned learning is addressed through the careful design of strategy, structure, systems, procedures, and plans.
- Emergent learning is encouraged by creating opportunities for informal sharing of knowledge and experience.
- Failures and unintended outcomes are the focus of constructive discussions leading to new approaches. When such incidents involve clients, care is taken to protect their reputation.

### People

- Staff members are required to be reflective practitioners to reflect on their experience, develop experience-based theories of change, continuously test these in practice with colleagues, and use their understanding and initiative to contribute to knowledge development.
- All staff members make frequent use of a range of tools, methods, and approaches for learning and collaborating with others.
- Staff members experience a high level of psychological safety and trust; they can rely on colleagues and are not exposed to unfair negative criticism.
- Teams operate as learning communities in which success and unexpected outcomes are analyzed and in which sensitively expressed dissent, conflict, and debate are encouraged as positive sources of learning.
- Staff members are encouraged to look outside the organization for new ideas, trends, and practices and to share what they learn with colleagues.
- Equal attention is paid to developing and retaining staff members at all levels.
- Staff members successfully use a wide range of opportunities for individual and team-based learning and development.
- Time and effort spent by staff members on learning and knowledge development are recognized as core activities in the organization's time and performance management systems.
- A wide range of formal and informal rewards and incentives for contributing to organizational learning and knowledge development is used (e.g., career advancement, increased income, informal peer status, additional time provided for study, and public acknowledgment for innovative contributions made).
- Leadership (based on the possession of expertise and knowledge) is expected from staff members at all levels in the organizational hierarchy.

*continued on next page*

<sup>12</sup> Storytelling is the use of stories or narratives as a communication tool to value, share, and capitalize on the knowledge of individuals.

<sup>13</sup> Staff profile pages are dynamic, adaptive electronic directories that store information about the knowledge, skills, experience, and interests of people. They are a cornerstone of successful knowledge management and learning initiatives.

<sup>14</sup> Power no longer resides exclusively (if at all) in states, institutions, or large corporations. It is located in the networks that structure society. Social network analysis seeks to understand networks and their participants and has two main focuses—the actors and their relationships in a specific social context.

Box 2 continued

### Knowledge

- There is a widespread recognition that while knowledge is created in the minds of individuals, knowledge development thrives in a rich web of professional networks among individuals.
- Important knowledge is easily accessible to people who need and use it.
- There are creative opportunities for knowledge to be developed and shared with others by facilitating networks between individuals.
- The design and delivery of products and services demonstrate how effective the organization is at applying what it has learned about the nature of good practice.
- The necessary systems and infrastructure for knowledge management are in place, understood, and working effectively.
- Evaluations are carefully designed with learning (as well as accountability) in mind. Systems ensure that the outputs of internal and independent evaluations are made widely available; carefully examined; and used to influence decision making and planning, question orthodox thinking, and trigger creativity and innovation.
- Peer assists, drawing on individuals' expertise and documented lessons learned, are used in planning new initiatives to reduce the likelihood of repeated and unintended negative outcomes.
- The organization has a resilient organizational memory and is not vulnerable to the loss of important knowledge when staff members move to other jobs in the organization or leave.
- Individuals and teams successfully use a range of methods for surfacing their tacit knowledge and making it available to others, for example, by using carefully targeted documentation and collaborative working practices.
- Adoption of after-action reviews and retrospects to learn from experience has been successful.

### Technology

- There is a thorough and shared understanding of the value of information and communication technologies for knowledge management and learning.
- Information and communication technologies facilitate but do not drive or constrain knowledge management and learning in the organization.
- Information and communication technologies are successfully used to create and sustain learning communities.
- Information and communication technologies are successfully used to keep people informed and aware of corporate developments.
- Information and communication technologies are successfully used to create unexpected, helpful connections between people and to provide access to their knowledge and ideas.
- Information and communication technologies are successfully used to encourage innovation and creativity.
- Information and communication technologies are successfully used to enable people to share and learn from good practices and unintended outcomes.
- Information and communication technologies are successfully used to enable people to identify internal sources of expertise.
- Creative use of information and communication technologies is high. At least five of the following have been successfully adopted: shared document drives, intranet pages, online communities and networks, wikis and other means of collaborative document production, blogging, online storytelling, lessons learned databases, staff profile pages, online webinars, podcasts, and social network mapping.
- Sufficient opportunities are provided for staff members to learn how to make use of available information and communication technologies for learning and knowledge sharing.

<sup>a</sup> The use of a six-point scale from Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree is recommended.

Source: ADB. 2009. *Learning for Change in ADB*. Manila. Available: [www.adb.org/documents/books/learning-for-change/default.asp](http://www.adb.org/documents/books/learning-for-change/default.asp)

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### STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT

A strategy is a long-term plan of action designed to achieve a particular goal.



# Building Institutional Capacity for Development

The conditions of economic and social progress include participation, democratic processes, and the location of necessarily diverse organizational setups at the community, national, regional, and increasingly global levels. Access to and judicious use of information underpin all these.



## RATIONALE

Every day, we are reminded of the changes needed for economic and social progress, but not that institutions are the channels through which such changes can happen. We would do well to consider what is meant by (and can be accomplished through) participation, how participation grows out of democratic processes, how these processes depend on the structure of institutions, and how institutions originate from (and are supported by) human resources. Only then will we understand better the processes of progress and picture more accurately the necessarily diverse levels of the organizational setups on which progress depends.

## PARTICIPATION

The rights and responsibilities of people are central to progress. And participation is essential since privileged minorities seldom approve of reforms and concentration of political, economic, or social power in their hands has retarded development. Therefore, five questions must be asked. Who initiates? Who participates? Who decides? Who controls? And who benefits? If it is the people, then development activities will most likely succeed (bearing in mind that the chance to take part hinges in turn on access to information, freedom of association to hold discussions, and arrangement of regular meetings at which officials and representatives can listen and respond to communities and be held accountable for delivering particular outputs.)

## DEMOCRATIC PROCESSES

But democracy is more than multi-partyism or the granting of concessions by authorities. Civil society needs to be fortified at all levels in agreement with the customary checks and balances

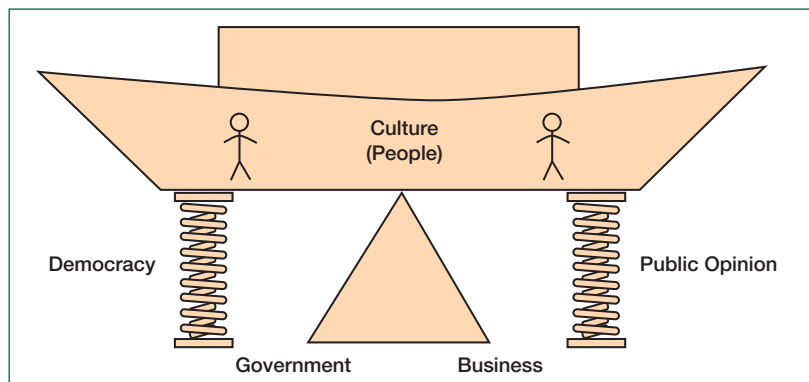
of cultures. So one should also ask what manner of democratic processes and what kinds of institutions are necessary to release the productive energies of people, and what conditions are required to make these processes and institutions work. The answer is that democratic processes must start from where people are and that—for democratic processes to unfold—accountability, transparency, predictability, and participation are essential.

## INSTITUTIONS

It follows that institutions should be located at three levels:

- **Community.** At the community level, a viable institution reflects the ideas, interests, and needs of communities. It has their confidence and the strength to communicate their views to higher authorities. Naturally, this assumes a degree of decentralizing decision making. It presupposes too a capacity to act on rights and responsibilities. Above all, perhaps, the right to organize must exist.
  - **Nation.** At the national level, a viable institution has competence in policy making, in socioeconomic analysis, and in technical research. It has negotiating parity with international bilateral and multilateral agencies. It provides inputs to national policy making without relying on external advice. And it helps identify linkages between the national, regional, and community levels.
  - **Region.** At the regional level, a viable institution possesses a mix of technical, managerial, and information-handling skills. It has also the ability to interpret communities to the nation (and vice versa). Most of all, it has a reasonable measure of autonomy (including independent revenues).
- A tall order? Yes. On which economic and social progress depends. ■

### Case Study: The Steel Fulcrum



Public debate over governance grows out of concern over the principles by which an economy ought to be governed. British artist Max Couper created a massive installation on the subject of balance that he displayed in Dusseldorf in 1997 and at the European Parliament in Brussels in 1998. The installation involved a 30-ton London barge on a steel fulcrum, sprung at each end and pivoted by the body weight of the public. The artwork can be seen as a simple metaphor of society as a room in which we are all together, a society whose equilibrium and future direction is determined by the way in which we decide to walk together.

Source: Summarized from Peter Schwartz and Blair Gibb. 1999. *When Good Companies Do Bad Things*. John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

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- ADB. 2006. *Strengthening Participation for Development Results: A Staff Guide to Consultation and Participation*. Manila. Available: [www.adb.org/documents/guidelines/strengthening-participation-for-dev/default.asp](http://www.adb.org/documents/guidelines/strengthening-participation-for-dev/default.asp)
- . 2009. *Governance*. Manila. Available: [www.adb.org/governance/default.asp](http://www.adb.org/governance/default.asp)



#### STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT

A strategy is a long-term plan of action designed to achieve a particular goal.

# Creating and Running Partnerships

Partnerships have a crucial role to play in the development agenda. To reach the critical mass required to reduce poverty, there must be more concerted effort, greater collaboration, alignment of inputs, and a leveraging of resources and effort. Understanding the drivers of success and the drivers of failure helps efforts to create and run them.



## ENHANCING STRATEGIC ALLIANCES

A partnership is a formal or informal agreement between two or more partners to work together to achieve common aims. For instance, multilateral and bilateral agencies can compensate for abilities and resources that fall far short of requirements by partnering with nongovernment organizations, both national and international. Such organizations are able to form close linkages and engender ownership and participation. Their consultative and participatory methods note and express stakeholder views that might otherwise not be entertained. This enables them to identify up-and-coming issues, respond rapidly to new circumstances, and experiment with innovative approaches. Therefore, partnering can improve the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability of operations. However, few would-be partners fully consider the opportunities and constraints that are associated with the creation and running of partnerships. A frequent cliché relates to the need to avoid duplication and overlap. Habitually, extant memoranda of agreement are worded loosely.

## DRIVERS OF SUCCESS

The drivers of success include

- Agreement that a partnership is necessary;
- Esteem and trust between different interests;
- The leadership of a respected individual (or individuals);
- The commitment of key interests developed through a clear and open process;
- The development of a shared vision of what might be achieved;
- Shared mandates or agendas;
- The development of compatible ways of working, which presupposes organizational flexibility;
- Good communication, perhaps with the help of facilitators;

- Collaborative decision making, with a commitment to achieving consensus;
- Effective organizational management; and
- Time to build the partnership.

## DRIVERS OF FAILURE

In opposition, the drivers of failure include

- A history of conflict among key interests;
- One partner manipulates or dominates;
- Unrealistic goals and objectives;
- Differences of philosophy and ways of working;
- Poor communication;
- An unequal and unacceptable balance of power and control;
- An absence of common interests;
- Hidden or irreconcilable agendas; and
- Financial and time commitments that outweigh potential benefits.

## GUIDELINES FOR MANAGERS

In general,

- Informal partnerships work best when a project is specific and achievable.
- Where the project is complex and spans several years, it may be necessary to create formal partnership structures for decision making.
- It is not easy to tackle a wide range of issues through an informal partnership. It is better to address such matters through consultations.
- Simply setting up a partnership structure does not solve all problems. Partners still need to clarify the joint goal and objective, values, and interests, among others.
- Partnerships do not have to be equal but the partners do need to feel that they are involved to an appropriate degree.



## GUIDELINES FOR PROJECT OFFICERS

The following suggests how project officers can make a start:

- Clarify the goal and objective behind forming a partnership.
- Identify the stakeholders and the key interests that can help or hinder the development of a project.
- Consider who one really needs as a partner and who would really want to be a partner: some stakeholders may only want to be consulted.
- Before approaching potential partners, make sure that you have support and agreement about working with others.
- Make informal contact with partners to understand their values and interests before formulating formal proposals.
- Communicate with your partners in a language they will understand, focusing on what they may want to achieve.
- Plan the partnership process over time.
- Use a range of methods to gather people in workshop sessions as well as in formal meetings.
- Encourage ideas from partners because ownership leads to commitment.
- Be trustworthy. One of the main barriers to creating and running successful partnerships lies in the attitudes that people bring to the process. To develop trust, it is necessary to draw out and deal with suspicions from past contacts; be open about what one is trying to achieve and about problems; be prepared to make mistakes and to admit to them; and deliver what one promises.

## CREATING AND RUNNING PARTNERSHIPS

Since partnerships are formal or informal agreements to work together to achieve common aims, there can be no recipe for success. Whatever the working arrangements, and whatever

phase of the partnership one is in, there will be problems: people will not read documents or come to meetings, colleagues will fail to deliver on promises, different interest groups will have conflicting aims, deadlines will be missed, and the champions behind the partnership may become scapegoats. Notwithstanding, the need to enhance strategic alliances calls on managers and project officers to

- Advertise country strategies and programs and details of loan, grant, and technical assistance projects through media, such as the internet, newsletters, and public meetings, and take care to give evidence of strategic integration.
- Map potential partners for strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats.
- Understand the priorities and skills of potential partners.
- Develop a partnership structure based on a clear purpose, trust, and agreement on responsibilities and accountability.
- Identify champions and communicate with them frequently.
- Build partner confidence through early participation in project work.
- Accept that partnerships need long-term support and make abilities and resources available.
- Develop a forward strategy for partnerships.
- Ensure appropriate monitoring of progress by the partnership.

The existence of commonalities of interest and memoranda of understanding offers only the promise of partnership. The onus of enhancing strategic alliances is on managers and project officers to integrate partnerships in annual operating outputs in the myriad ways that the multifarious nature of such associations dictates. ■



### STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT

A strategy is a long-term plan of action designed to achieve a particular goal.

# Culture Theory

Culture theory strengthens the expectation that markets work, not because they are comprised of autonomous individuals who are free of social sanctions but because they are powered by social beings and their distinctive ideas, beliefs, values, and knowledge. It can contribute to understanding and promoting development where group relationships predominate and individualism is tempered.



## RATIONALE

Some needs are common to all people—at all times and in all places. They are the need to make a living, the need for social organization, the need for knowledge and learning, the need for normative and metaphysical expression, and the need for aesthetic manifestation. These nuts and bolts of everyday life work through the co-evolving realms of environment, economy, society, polity, and technology to make up systems of mutual sustainability or (in opposition) mutual vulnerability.

Since people (not economies) are the main object and ultimate purpose of endeavors to progress, a society's culture is not just an instrument of development cooperation: it is its basis. The marriage of economy and environment was overdue and has spawned a world agenda for that purpose. Likewise, the relationship between culture and development should be clarified and deepened in ways that are authentic, indigenous, self-reliant, sovereign, civilized, and creative.

## DEFINITION

Culture, defined in its broadest sense, is the totality of a society's distinctive ideas, beliefs, values, and knowledge. It exhibits the ways humans interpret their environments.

## APPLICATIONS

Culture theory is a branch of anthropology, semiotics, and other related social science disciplines such as political economy, in particular, but also sociology and communication (to name a few). It seeks to define heuristic concepts of culture. Hence, cultural studies often concentrate on how a particular phenomenon relates to matters of ideology, nationality, ethnicity, social class, and gender.<sup>1</sup> The potential

for application is correspondingly vast—it follows that practitioners of culture theory draw from a diverse array of theories and associated practices and encompass many different approaches, methods, and academic perspectives.<sup>2</sup> And so, it remains relatively unstructured as an academic field that needs to move from “Let’s” to “How.” Taking culture into account should mean understanding how cultural dimensions enter utility and production functions of various kinds. In the case of development agencies and their partner countries, new processes of policy analysis and participatory management should surely be devised so that non-economic social sciences become full partners in the decision making concerning the policy and investment decisions that guide business processes. Much remains to be done.

## CHARACTERISTICS

Therefore, approaches to cultural studies are likely to range widely. However, Ziauddin Sardar sees that most tend to share the following characteristics:

- They aim to examine their subject matter in terms of cultural practices and their relation to power.
- They aim to understand culture in all its complex forms and to analyze the social and political contexts in which it manifests itself.
- They consider culture as both the object of study and the location of political criticism and action.
- They expose and attempt to reconcile knowledge divides to overcome the split between tacit cultural knowledge and objective (so-called universal) forms of knowledge.
- They are committed to an ethical evaluation of society, and to political action.

<sup>1</sup> Increasingly, cultural studies also focus on the interface of information and communication technologies and society.

<sup>2</sup> For instance, one branch of culture theory places a primary importance on the cultural institutions that are involved in the production, dissemination, and consumption of culture.

## BENEFITS

Culture theory's holistic perspective, englobing the needs common to all people, does not lend itself to easy action. But, culture theory alone pays simultaneous and even attention to these needs and makes possible a focus on the whole and the parts, on contexts and contents, on values and value systems, and on strategic relationships between key variables, countries, blocs of countries, and human beings and the natural environment. And so, it yields conceptual insights and practical benefits and allows informed choices and intelligent decisions to be made about the future. It enables us, for instance, to deal better with complexity and fragmentation—the emphasis is on systems rather than on parts of systems. And it helps to ensure that economies are contextualized properly and pointed in the right direction. For those reasons, among others, they

can be constrained and enriched by the larger cultures in which they are located. Consequently, they stop functioning as self-governing entities. Also, by focusing on the totality and innate worth of a given society, culture theory can minimize the ethnocentric bias that results from one's cultural conditioning. ■

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### STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT

A strategy is a long-term plan of action designed to achieve a particular goal.

# Design Thinking

The need for 21st-century mindsets and protocols has sparked interest in design thinking. That is a human-centered, prototype-driven process for the exploration of new ideas that can be applied to operations, products, services, strategies, and even management.



## A DESIGN FOR LIFE

In a world of continuous flux, where markets mature faster and everyone is affected by information overload, organizations regard innovation, including management innovation, as the prime driver of sustainable competitive advantage. To unlock opportunities, some of them use mindsets and protocols from the field of design to make out unarticulated wants and deliberately imagine, envision, and spawn futures.

Design is more important when function is taken for granted and no longer helps stakeholders differentiate. In the last five years, design thinking has emerged as the quickest organizational path to innovation and high-performance, changing the way creativity and commerce interact.<sup>1</sup> In the past, design was a downstream step in the product development process, aiming to enhance the appeal of an existing product. Today, however, organizations ask designers to imagine solutions that meet explicit or latent needs and to build upstream entire systems that optimize customer experience and satisfaction.

Therefore, although the term “design” is commonly understood to describe an object (or end result), it is in its latest and most effective form a process, an action, and a verb, not a noun: essentially, it is a protocol to see, shape, and build.

“The proper study of mankind is the science of design.”

—Herbert Simon

Lately, design approaches are also being applied to infuse insight into the heart of campaigns and address social and other concerns.<sup>2</sup>

## DEFINING DESIGN

Herbert Simon<sup>3</sup> defined design as the changing of existing conditions into preferred ones.<sup>4</sup> Design thinking, then, is about using the sensibilities and methodologies that characterize designers to create new ideas, new alternatives, new choices, and new viabilities that satisfy stakeholder desires. It is fundamentally abductive,<sup>5</sup> even if designers still induce patterns and deduce answers.

Stemming from abductive reasoning, design thinking is empathic, personal, subjective, interpretive, integrative, experimental, synthetic, pictorial, dialectical, opportunistic, and optimistic. It is a frame of mind for problem solving that can balance legitimate needs for stability, efficiency,

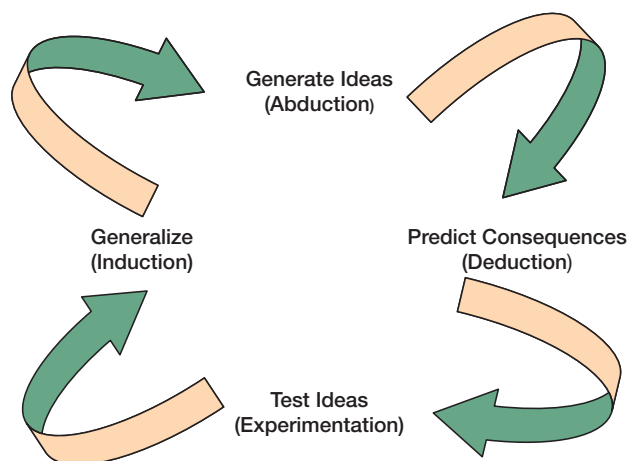
<sup>1</sup> In truth, companies such as Apple in particular, but also General Electric, Levi Strauss, Nike, and Procter & Gamble, to name a few, pioneered the notion some time ago.

<sup>2</sup> See, for instance, Tim Brown and Jocelyn Wyatt. 2010. Design Thinking for Social Innovation. *Stanford Social Innovation Review*. Winter. Available: [www.ssireview.org/articles/entry/design\\_thinking\\_for\\_social\\_innovation/](http://www.ssireview.org/articles/entry/design_thinking_for_social_innovation/) In 2007, Oxfam approached IDEO, a global design consultancy, with a brief. How might the charity better educate people to understand climate change? How might Oxfam translate that understanding into a better relationship with donors?

<sup>3</sup> Herbert Simon (1916–2001) was an American political scientist, economist, and psychologist whose research ranged across the fields of cognitive psychology, computer science, public administration, economics, management, philosophy of science, sociology, and political science. See Herbert Simon. 1969. *The Sciences of the Artificial*. Massachusetts Institute of Technology Press.

<sup>4</sup> Herbert Simon saw that the rationality of individuals is limited by the information they have, the cognitive limitations of their minds, and the finite amount of time they have to make decisions. “Bounded rationality” leads them to “satisfice,” that is, choose what might not be optimal but will make them sufficiently happy.

<sup>5</sup> Abduction is the process of inference to most likely, or best, explanations from accepted facts. Deduction means determining the conclusion. For example: “When it rains, the grass gets wet. It rains. Thus, the grass is wet.” Induction means determining the rule. To illustrate: “The grass has been wet every time it has rained. Thus, when it rains, the grass gets wet.” Abduction means determining the precondition. For instance: “When it rains, the grass gets wet. The grass is wet, it must have rained.” Abductive thinking is very close to the concept of lateral thinking, for which numerous tools exist.

**Figure 1: The Cycle of Design Thinking**

Source: Adapted from David Dunne and Roger Martin. 2006. Design Thinking and How It Will Change Management Education: An Interview and Discussion. *Academy of Management Learning and Education*. 5 (4). pp. 512–523.

and predictability with the requirement for spontaneity, experimentation, and serendipity. In the conceptual age,<sup>6</sup> it is a “people first” approach to the full spectrum and minutiae of innovation activities that has applications in operations, products, services, strategies, and even management.<sup>7</sup>

### INSIDE THE DESIGN THINKING PROCESS

Design thinking revolves around three key phases: inspiration, ideation, and implementation.<sup>8</sup> During these phases, problems are framed, questions—also about questions—are asked, ideas are generated, and answers are obtained. The phases are not linear; they can take place concurrently and can also be repeated to build up ideas along the continuum of innovation. The design thinking process allows information and ideas to be organized, choices to be made, situations to be improved, and

knowledge to be gained as depicted in Roger Martin’s three-stage funnel.<sup>9</sup>

Design thinking is, inherently, a prototyping process powering deep understanding of what people want in their lives, as well as what they like (or not) about the way that is made, packaged, marketed, sold, and supported. To this end, multidisciplinary teams of T-shaped individuals<sup>10</sup> are encouraged to fail often to succeed sooner through trial and error: innovations do not arise from incremental tweaks.

**“If I’d asked my customers what they wanted, they’d have said ‘a faster horse’.”**

—Henry Ford

<sup>6</sup> Daniel Pink has identified six high concept, high touch abilities that have become crucial in the conceptual age. (The term “conceptual economy” describes the contribution of creativity, innovation, and design skills to economic competitiveness, especially in the global context.) The six abilities are design, story, symphony, empathy, play, and meaning. By high concept, he means the ability to detect patterns and opportunities, to shape artistic and emotional beauty, to craft satisfying narratives, to fuse apparently unrelated ideas into an invention. By high touch, he connotes the ability to understand the subtleties of human interaction, empathize and find happiness in the pursuit of purpose and meaning. Design is one profession that relies on all six abilities. Daniel Pink. 2005. *A Whole New Mind: Why Right-Brainers Will Rule the Future*. Penguin Books Ltd.

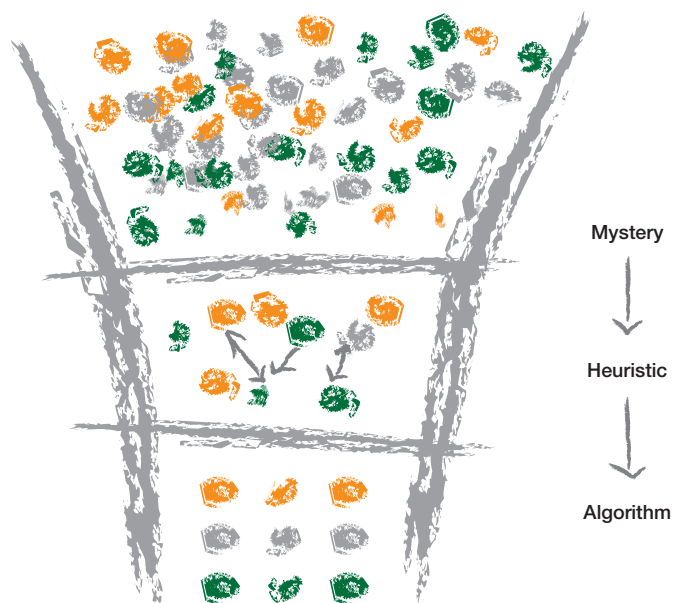
<sup>7</sup> It can, for instance, be used to develop and drive strategy, open new markets, fashion new offerings, formulate new business models, identify new applications for technology, articulate new ways of connecting to customers, and forge new partnerships.

<sup>8</sup> Some articulate these further into seven: define, research, ideate, prototype, choose, implement, and learn.

<sup>9</sup> The first stage of the knowledge funnel is the investigation of a mystery (that may have several forms). The second is the delineation of a heuristic, viz., an educated guess, intuitive judgment, rule of thumb, or simple common sense, that narrows the area of inquiry so that it may be managed. The third is the creation of an algorithm, viz., a formula. As one moves down the funnel, one creates efficiency but must necessarily leave things out. See Roger Martin. 2009. *The Design of Business: Why Design Thinking is the Next Competitive Advantage*. Harvard Business School Publishing.

<sup>10</sup> T-shaped individuals possess deep knowledge in a core area of expertise as well as broad knowledge in disciplines, such as management, finance, and business operations. Tom Kelley of IDEO has also observed a number of roles that people can play in an organization to foster innovation and new ideas and offer an effective counterpoint to naysayers. They are the anthropologist, the experimenter, the cross-pollinator, the hurdler, the collaborator, the director, the experience architect, the set designer, the caregiver, and the storyteller. See Tom Kelley. 2008. *The Ten Faces of Innovation*. Profile Books Ltd.

**Figure 2: The Knowledge Funnel**



Source: Roger Martin. 2009. *The Design of Business: Why Design Thinking is the Next Competitive Advantage*. Harvard Business School Publishing. Rotman Designworks. 2010. Available: [www.rotmandesignworks.ca/business\\_design.html](http://www.rotmandesignworks.ca/business_design.html)

By the same token, design is never done: a market is always changing, least of all because good ideas are copied, and design must change with it. Design success is the integration of design thinking into an organization: at that level, it becomes a powerful tool to solve unpredictable problems.

## DESIGNING BUSINESS

To Heather Fraser, the greatest payout of design thinking lies in the design of strategies and business models for organizational performance that creates both economic and human value. Broadening the definition of design, she argues that it can be the

**Table: Design Shops and Traditional Organizations**

Feature	Design Shop	Traditional Organization
Goal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Requisite reliability and validity to maintain competitive advantage</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reliability, viz., the production of consistent replicable outcomes</li> </ul>
Flow of Work Life	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Projects</li> <li>Defined Terms</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ongoing tasks</li> <li>Permanent assignments</li> </ul>
Style of Work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Collaborative</li> <li>Iterative</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Defined roles</li> <li>Wait until the conditions are “right”</li> </ul>
Mode of Thinking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Deductive</li> <li>Inductive</li> <li>Abductive</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Deductive</li> <li>Inductive</li> </ul>
Source of Status	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Solving “wicked” problems</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Managing big budgets and large staffs</li> </ul>
Dominant Attitude	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Nothing is impossible</li> <li>Constraints magnify the challenge and increase excitement</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What can be done is what budgets allow</li> <li>Constraints are the enemy</li> </ul>

*continued on next page*

Table continued

Feature	Design Shop	Traditional Organization
Problem-Solving Approach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Iterative</li> <li>• Relies on a “build to think” process dependent on trial and error</li> <li>• Intuitive thinking seeks 100% validity through knowing without reasoning; design thinking attempts to bridge the predilection gap between intuitive and analytical thinking through generative reasoning</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Definitive</li> <li>• Relies on equations for “proof” that declare truths and certainties about the world</li> <li>• Analytical thinking seeks 100% reliability through induction and deduction</li> </ul>
Validation Through	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Validation through what customers do, typically by means of direct observation and usability testing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Validation through what customers say, typically by means of qualitative and quantitative research</li> </ul>
Informed By	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Direct customer observation</li> <li>• Abductive reasoning and an interest in what might be</li> <li>• Reframing views as a creative challenge</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Market analysis</li> <li>• Aggregate customer behavior</li> </ul>
Completed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Design thinking continually evolves with customers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The completion of the strategy phase marks the start of the product development phase</li> </ul>
Focused On	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An understanding of customer activities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An understanding of the results of customer activities</li> </ul>
Tools Used to Communicate Strategic Vision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prototypes, films, and scenarios</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Spreadsheets and PowerPoint decks</li> </ul>
Described Through	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pictorial representations and direct experiences with prototypes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Words (that are often open to interpretation)</li> </ul>
Team Members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “T-shaped” expertise comprising a principal vertical skill and a horizontal set of secondary skills</li> <li>• Collaborative responsibilities</li> <li>• Emphasis on empathizing with team members on the extremes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Vertical expertise</li> <li>• Individual responsibilities</li> </ul>
Work Patterns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Temporary projects with associated tasks and flexible hours</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Permanent jobs, ongoing tasks, and fixed hours</li> </ul>
Reward Structure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Peer recognition based on the quality of solutions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Corporate recognition based on the bottom line</li> </ul>

Source: Compiled and adapted from David Dunne and Roger Martin. 2006. Design Thinking and How It Will Change Management Education: An Interview and Discussion. *Academy of Management Learning and Education*. 5 (4). pp. 512–523; and LukeW Ideation + Design. 2010. Available: [www.lukew.com/](http://www.lukew.com/)

path to understanding stakeholder needs, the tool for visualizing new solutions, and the process for translating cutting-edge ideas into effective strategies.<sup>11</sup> Heather Fraser, from whose work the following draws, sees three iterative gears in business design. Anchored in the needs of stakeholders, they apply deep user understanding to stimulate high-value conceptual visualizations and extract from these the strategic intent needed to reform business models.

- **Gear One: Deep User Understanding.** The first step is to turn the telescope around to reframe the organization and view its business entirely through the eyes of the customer (and, of course, other critical stakeholders). It is necessary to look beyond the direct use of an organization’s products or services to the contexts in which they are located, in terms of the activities surrounding their utilization, to gain deeper

**“Design is not just what it looks like and feels like. Design is how it works.”**

— Steve Jobs

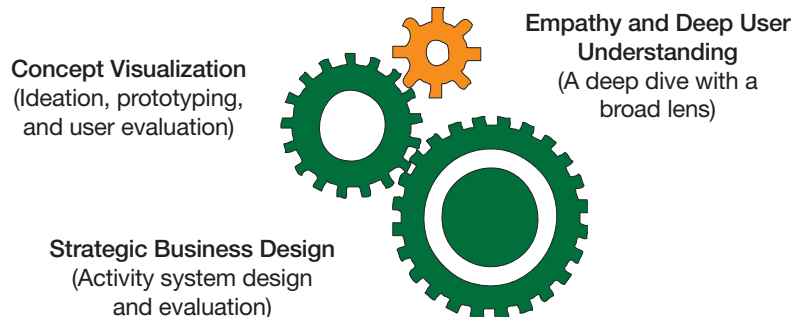
insight and broader behavioral and psychographic perspectives. It is also critical to understand the “whole person” engaged in any given activity—not just what they do, but how they feel and how their needs surrounding their activities link to other parts of their lives.

- **Gear Two: Concept Visualization.** With renewed empathy and a broader set of criteria for innovation serving as springboard, creativity can be unleashed and move through multiple-prototyping and concept enrichment, ideally with users. It is vital to look beyond what is to what could be,

<sup>11</sup> Heather Fraser. 2009. Designing Business: New Models for Success. *Design Management Review*. 20 (2). pp. 55–65.



**Figure 3: The Gears of Business Design**



Source: Heather Fraser. 2009. Designing Business: New Models for Success. *Design Management Review*. 20 (2). pp. 55–65.

using imagination to generate altogether new-to-the-world solutions. At this stage, there are no constraints, only possibilities. Engaging all functions and disciplines on the team infuses ideas into the process, fortifies team alignment, and prepares the traction that will lock down strategies and activate them later.

- **Gear Three: Strategic Business Design.** With well-defined, user-inspired solutions at hand the third gear aligns broad concepts with future reality. This entails prototyping business models to integrate their parts and assess the impact of the activity system as a whole. It is imperative to identify what will drive the success of the solutions; prioritize what activities an organization must undertake to deliver related strategies; define relationships strategically, operationally, and economically; and determine what net impacts the new business models will have. ■

## FURTHER READING

- David Dunne and Roger Martin. 2006. Design Thinking and How It Will Change Management Education: An Interview and Discussion. *Academy of Management Learning and Education*. 5 (4). pp. 512–523.
- Heather Fraser. 2009. Designing Business: New Models for Success. *Design Management Review*. 20 (2). pp. 55–65.
- Roger Martin. 2009. *The Design of Business: Why Design Thinking is the Next Competitive Advantage*. Harvard Business School Publishing.
- Rotman Designworks. 2010. Available: [www.rotmandesignworks.ca/business\\_design.html](http://www.rotmandesignworks.ca/business_design.html)



## STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT

A strategy is a long-term plan of action designed to achieve a particular goal.



# Enhancing Knowledge Management Strategies<sup>1</sup>

Despite worldwide attention to strategic planning, the notion of strategic practice is surprisingly new. To draw a strategy is relatively easy but to execute it is difficult—strategy is both a macro and a micro phenomenon that depends on synchronization. One should systematically review, evaluate, prioritize, sequence, manage, redirect and, if necessary, even cancel strategic initiatives.



## BACKGROUND

On 4 May 2009, at the 42nd Annual Meeting of the Board of Governors of ADB, Haruhiko Kuroda—ADB President and concurrent Chairperson of ADB's Board of Directors—stressed the importance of knowledge to that organization:

*To be fully effective, we must also consciously and actively blend knowledge with financing. We will focus on developing, capturing, and sharing knowledge in all our work, ensuring that ADB serves an intermediary role for both financing and knowledge.*

## ENHANCING KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT UNDER STRATEGY 2020

These *Knowledge Solutions* showcase the set of actions/outputs that, on 31 July 2009, President Kuroda then approved to advance the knowledge management agenda under *Strategy 2020: The Long-Term Strategic Framework of the Asian Development Bank (2008–2020)*.<sup>2</sup> Four pillars will support them: (i) sharpening the knowledge focus in all ADB operations, (ii) promoting and empowering communities of practice for knowledge capture and sharing, (iii) strengthening external knowledge partnerships to develop and disseminate knowledge, and (iv) scaling up staff

development programs to improve technical skills and manage knowledge. The four pillars are closely related: the set of actions/outputs that make up the first focuses on adding value to ADB's operations in its developing member countries; the other three sets deal with how that might be achieved.

## ARTICULATING ACTIONS/OUTPUTS

ADB's plan of action for knowledge management connotes a pragmatic, step-by-step approach: the initial actions/outputs are for a 3-year time frame; measures for their implementation will be incorporated into ADB's Work Program and Budget Framework (2010–2012); and the progress will be monitored and reviewed at the time of ADB's annual budget review by the Regional and Sustainable Development Department in ADB, in consultation with ADB's Budget, Personnel, and Management Systems Department and Strategy and Policy Department.

**“Plans are only good intentions unless they immediately degenerate into hard work.”**

—Peter Drucker

<sup>1</sup> These *Knowledge Solutions* abridge *Enhancing Knowledge Management Under Strategy 2020*, the plan of action for 2009–2011 that the Asian Development Bank approved in July 2009.

<sup>2</sup> Available: [www.adb.org/documents/policies/strategy2020/strategy2020.pdf](http://www.adb.org/documents/policies/strategy2020/strategy2020.pdf)

## IDENTIFYING COMPLEMENTARY MEASURES CONTRIBUTING TO ACTIONS/OUTPUTS

ADB's plan of action does not discuss but flags aspects that support and facilitate knowledge management practices, viz., budgetary allocations, business process improvements, and information technology. Several measures are already under way; ADB's Budget, Personnel, and Management Systems Department, Office of Information Systems and Technology, and Strategy and Policy Department will address others separately,

after consultations with relevant parties. These offices and departments were requested to ensure that complementary measures contribute to and fully support the implementation of the actions/outputs presented in the plan. ■

**“Half the failures of this world arise from pulling in one's horse as he is leaping.”**

— Julius Hare

**Table: Navigating a Strategy**

Strategizing		Learning
Predicting and Controlling	↔	Participating
Theorizing	↔	Experimenting
Choosing Directions	↔	Enabling Natural Selection
Solving Problems	↔	Building Capabilities
Challenging Others	↔	Listening to Others
Explaining	↔	Interpreting
Seeking the Truth	↔	Seeking What Works
Desiring the Future	↔	Trusting Fate

Source: Adapted from van der Heijden, Kees. 2004. Can Internally Generated Futures Accelerate Organizational Learning? *Futures*. 36. pp. 145–159.

## Box: Enhancing Knowledge Management Under Strategy 2020: Plan of Action for 2009–2011

### Introduction

Knowledge management at ADB is evolving purposefully in the right direction, although more needs to be done. In 2001, *Moving the Poverty Reduction Agenda Forward in Asia and the Pacific: The Long-Term Strategic Framework of the Asian Development Bank (2001–2015)*<sup>a</sup> stressed the role of knowledge management and committed ADB to becoming a “learning organization.” In 2002, ADB established a Knowledge Management Committee, among other measures, to guide the implementation of the long-term strategic framework. In 2004, ADB issued a framework paper on Knowledge Management in ADB<sup>b</sup> that set out five areas to prioritize ADB's knowledge management actions.<sup>c</sup> The progress made is highlighted below:

- Enhanced appreciation for ADB's flagship knowledge products, such as the *Asian Development Outlook*,<sup>d</sup> *Key Indicators for Asia and the Pacific*,<sup>e</sup> and *Asia Economic Monitor*,<sup>f</sup> among many others.
- The launch of communities of practice and the establishment of regional knowledge hubs, both adding to ADB's growing array of knowledge partnerships.
- Improved coordination mechanisms that govern cooperation between the knowledge and operations departments, and encouraged development of approaches, such as the Technical Assistance Strategic Forum.<sup>g</sup>
- Nomination of focal persons for knowledge management in the operations departments, and establishment of knowledge management units in several departments.

<sup>a</sup> Available: [www.adb.org/documents/policies/ltsf/ltsf.pdf](http://www.adb.org/documents/policies/ltsf/ltsf.pdf)

<sup>b</sup> Available: [www.adb.org/documents/policies/knowledge-management/knowledge-management.pdf](http://www.adb.org/documents/policies/knowledge-management/knowledge-management.pdf)

<sup>c</sup> The framework sought (i) improved organizational culture for knowledge sharing, (ii) an improved management system, (iii) improved business processes and information technology solutions for knowledge capture, enrichment, storage, and retrieval, (iv) well-functioning communities of practice, and (v) expanded knowledge sharing, learning, and dissemination through external relations and networking.

<sup>d</sup> Available: [www.adb.org/documents/books/ado/](http://www.adb.org/documents/books/ado/)

<sup>e</sup> Available: [www.adb.org/statistics/ki.asp](http://www.adb.org/statistics/ki.asp)

<sup>f</sup> Available: <http://aric.adb.org/asia-economic-monitor>

<sup>g</sup> The Technical Assistance Strategic Forum was introduced in 2008 to provide direction for ADB-wide research and development technical assistance and knowledge products on topics of high relevance and impact to developing countries in Asia and the Pacific.

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Box continued

- New information technology solutions for improved knowledge sharing in ADB, such as C-Cube and e-Star.
- Corporate-level recognition of knowledge management and learning by inclusion of chapters on sector and thematic highlights, generating and sharing knowledge, and independent evaluation in ADB's annual reports.<sup>h</sup>
- Transformation of the ADB Library<sup>i</sup> into a knowledge hub to encourage knowledge networking. The Library hosts book launches and activities of the communities of practice, and provides kinesthetic informational resources such as a touch screen that allows staff to show project locations. In addition to its self-service information resources, it provides timely information support to ADB staff engaged in project design and development. Demand for the Library's knowledge services is driven by the human need for connectivity, collaboration, and storytelling. The Library also created new staff positions to align its operations with the information requirements of *Strategy 2020: The Long-Term Strategic Framework of the Asian Development Bank (2008–2020)*.<sup>j</sup>

To further accelerate progress, better institutionalize knowledge, and help ADB change the way it conducts its core business, the Knowledge Management Center<sup>k</sup> in the Regional and Sustainable Development Department conducted in 2008 a fundamental review of knowledge management practices in ADB, with support from the German Agency for Technical Cooperation. The review involved ADB staff, including those in resident missions, in surveys and focus group meetings. It confirmed the progress made in the five areas of the Knowledge Management Framework, and contributed the following strategic findings and recommendations:

- While the main thrusts of Knowledge Management in ADB remain valid, ADB needs to make adjustments to strengthen its work on knowledge.<sup>l</sup>
- Adjustments must be practical, incremental, and forward-looking, and in particular be aligned progressively to Strategy 2020.
- Emphasis should be placed on improving ADB's ability to deliver more adequate and focused knowledge support to developing member countries.
- A renewed effort in knowledge management is needed vis-à-vis the coordination mechanisms that drive internal and external knowledge partnerships.

The review conducted in 2008 emphasized also that knowledge management is not the sole responsibility of a department, office, or unit: it is an ADB-wide responsibility and all departments have important roles and accountability—the Knowledge Management Center serves as focal point to coordinate knowledge management practices across the institution.

Under Strategy 2020, knowledge solutions are one of five key drivers of change that underpin ADB's lending and technical advisory services to developing member countries. The generation—and application—of knowledge underpins development effectiveness. It increases the relevance of ADB to developing member countries but also to other development partners. The strategy states that “*ADB will play a bigger part in putting the potential of knowledge solutions to work in the Asia and Pacific region.*” Recognizing the steadily increasing value that developing member countries attach to knowledge services and knowledge solutions, Strategy 2020 explains that ADB's knowledge management activities must be enriched through (i) internal learning from operational practice, and (ii) external learning from long-term strategic partnerships with other international finance institutions and world-class academic and research institutions. Strategy 2020 also calls for streamlining and enhancing institutional arrangements for knowledge management where appropriate.

Based on the findings of the 2008 review and in light of Strategy 2020, this paper presents a practical set of actions/outputs to further advance ADB's knowledge management agenda. The fundamental premise considered when drafting the paper was: “What does ADB need to know to achieve its goals?” The associated questions considered regarding knowledge in ADB were: “When do we need it?,” “Where do we source it from?,” and “How will we use it?” Knowledge is treated mainly in terms of flow, not stock, to emphasize the need to continue to develop insights and new practices and actively support knowledge intermediation through ADB's operations. Knowledge, if not replenished continuously, is likely to be the fastest-depreciating resource in ADB over time and even across ADB's clients. The implication is that ADB must invest in knowledge very judiciously from realistic assessments of what value a particular knowledge product or service will provide to ADB and its clients with emphasis on “usability” and “use,” that is, knowledge that can and will be used in clearly defined and intended ways. All this, in turn, has implications for human resources and recruitment of relatively “specialized” expertise against a range of “knowledge positions.”

The action plan starts with emphasis on sharpening the knowledge focus in ADB's operations, to be supported by efforts to empower communities of practice for knowledge capture and sharing, since internal demand is important, with related knowledge demonstrating faster value to feed in at critical points of corporate planning and priority setting. The plan then aims to strengthen external knowledge partnerships for knowledge development and dissemination, and finally scale up staff development programs. Taken together, the action plan represents a pragmatic and step-by-step approach, and the actions/outputs are initial measures for a 3-year time frame beginning 2009. Measures for their implementation will be incorporated into the Work Program and Budget Framework (2010–2012). The

<sup>h</sup> Available: [www.adb.org/documents/reports/annual\\_report/2008/annual-report-2008-vol01.pdf](http://www.adb.org/documents/reports/annual_report/2008/annual-report-2008-vol01.pdf)

<sup>i</sup> See [www.adb.org/about/library.asp](http://www.adb.org/about/library.asp)

<sup>j</sup> Available: [www.adb.org/documents/policies/strategy2020/strategy2020.pdf](http://www.adb.org/documents/policies/strategy2020/strategy2020.pdf)

<sup>k</sup> See [www.adb.org/knowledge-management/default.asp](http://www.adb.org/knowledge-management/default.asp)

<sup>l</sup> Data from ADB's fourth Most Admired Knowledge Enterprise survey, conducted in 2008, indicate that many staff remain unconvinced of ADB's commitment to knowledge management and learning. Notwithstanding the small number of questions on which it is based, which suggests that ADB should develop additional mechanisms with which to assess progress at distinct organizational levels, the survey invites action to guide more effectively ADB's transformation into a knowledge-based institution.

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Box continued

progress of implementation will be monitored and reviewed as part of the annual budget review. The draft paper benefited from interdepartmental comments, which were incorporated as appropriate. This final paper reflects the comments from a Management briefing session on 4 June 2009 and from the Management Committee Meeting held on 21 July 2009.

The paper does not offer detailed discussions of aspects that facilitate knowledge management practices, such as budgetary allocations, business process improvements, and information technology. These are critical to implementation but must be addressed separately. For example, the involvement of the Office of Information Systems and Technology is essential to ensure that follow-up facilitative actions/outputs fully support the implementation of those presented in the paper.<sup>m</sup>

### Proposed Actions/Outputs

The action plan rests on four pillars:

- (i) **Sharpen the Knowledge Focus in ADB's Operations.** ADB's unique abilities to generate, disseminate, and apply knowledge are based on three areas of comparative advantage: ADB's central position in identifying trends within and across the region; its capacity for interdisciplinary and integrated approaches; and its ability to then blend knowledge and insight with large, concessional financing. Knowledge enriches financing operations and, in combination with ADB's convening power, spurs development effectiveness. Effective knowledge management can—in fact, must—help identify and put potential knowledge services and knowledge solutions to work through regional and country partnership strategies, investment programs and projects, and technical assistance and policy dialogue. The following actions/outputs are proposed to sharpen the knowledge focus in ADB's operations at the regional, country, and project levels:
- At the regional level, ADB has made notable progress in undertaking and disseminating high impact regional studies. ADB is increasingly recognized as a lead policy advisor that actively contributes to regional forums on key challenges facing developing Asia. Regional strategic studies also support ADB's corporate operational planning. To better serve this

function, ADB needs a focused and coordinated approach to identifying and organizing priority regional studies. The Technical Assistance Strategic Forum is one such mechanism to coordinate, over the medium-term, research and sector work among knowledge and operations departments.

- At the country level, the country partnership strategies are key documents that guide medium-term operational programming, in line with international good practices, with focus on results and development effectiveness. Measuring results and assessing development effectiveness call for attention to explicitly reflecting knowledge management as part of formulating and implementing country partnership strategies.<sup>n</sup> In particular, the results matrix in country partnership strategies should specify knowledge indicators. Knowledge management activities should also be properly resourced in the country operations budgets, including resources for economic and sector work, and country diagnostics to inform the country partnership strategy preparation and policy dialogue.
- At the project level, there is ample room to sharpen the knowledge focus. Lending and technical assistance grants are among the primary channels through which ADB brings value to its clients. Lending and technical assistance operations also represent unique opportunities for introducing innovation and promoting learning. Is a project relevant and responsive to the specific problem being considered? Does the design of interventions reflect the knowledge, lessons, and insights of similar situations? What innovative features characterize the project design and implementation? How can the project or program be designed to support rigorous impact evaluation, and to encourage learning and knowledge sharing? These are questions project teams are encouraged to emphasize when developing loan and technical assistance proposals and presenting them to the clients and the ADB Management for decision making.

Implementation of these actions/outputs, especially to sharpen the knowledge focus at the country and project levels, will be supported by the ongoing review of ADB's business processes. This will strengthen ADB's ability to provide innovative services to its clients—both to respond to new challenges and opportunities as they emerge and to implement tried and tested practices.

<sup>m</sup> Advances in information technology can leverage knowledge solutions and knowledge services, and the Office of Information Systems and Technology has a significant role to play in helping deliver the increased effectiveness that Strategy 2020 seeks, both in ADB and outside it. Indeed, progress cannot be achieved in the absence of information technology. It can help ADB collect and connect knowledge (that often gets lost) more systematically. One such example is an ADB-wide, web-based repository of good practice notes capturing lessons learned throughout the program or project cycle. Information technology can also be deployed for staff profile pages that store and share information about the knowledge, skills, experience, and interests of staff, and for content-rich communications within ADB, and across resident missions. Improvements in information technology systems can also support web-based communications with external stakeholders, and thus store and share their know-how (and possibly even add value to it). It stands to reason that the Office of Information Systems and Technology should be a bigger part of ADB's knowledge agenda, in coordination with the knowledge and operations departments. The motive, the means, and the opportunities can be clarified when the Office of Information Systems and Technology formulates a follow-up to the Information System and Technology Strategy (2004–2009).

<sup>n</sup> This invites revision of the template for country partnership strategies. For instance, the new format for country strategic opportunities programs introduced by the International Fund for Agricultural Development in 2006 contains a section on knowledge management and communication that articulates the Fund's knowledge management strategy relative to country-level objectives. It aims to ensure that knowledge management processes are effectively mobilized in country-level policy dialogue, program development, and program implementation.

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(ii) **Empower the Communities of Practice.** Communities of practice are a potential instrument with which to implement knowledge management within ADB, ultimately to the benefit of its clients. The communities of practice keep know-how of a domain alive by sharing what they know, building on that, and adapting knowledge to specific sector and project applications. ADB introduced the concept of communities of practice in 2002 at the time of ADB's reorganization, with adjustments in 2005. At present, ADB has 12 communities of practice in key sector and thematic areas. The performance of the communities of practice was reviewed in 2009. The exercise identified that

- (i) the communities of practice have limited outreach to all staff, especially those in resident missions and representative offices;
  - (ii) the budget for staff development and knowledge sharing through the communities of practice is limited; and
  - (iii) there is a need to realign the work and mandates of the communities of practice with the priorities of Strategy 2020. The following actions/outputs are proposed to empower the communities of practice to act as drivers of change, to promote exchange of ideas and good practices, and to upgrade technical skills among peers:
- Ensure that communities of practice become an integral part of ADB's business processes. Supervisors should fully support both professional and national staff (including those in resident missions and representative offices) to participate in the communities, with the staff's contributions recognized more vigorously in the performance and development planning exercise. Management will ensure provision of sufficient time for the chairs of the committees to perform their functions for the communities of practice.
  - Increase the budget of the communities of practice, based on a clear set of objectives, and, most importantly, measurable "outcomes" of improved knowledge management. Increased budgets will be allocated clearly, directly, and explicitly in proportion to how practical and tangible knowledge management occurs. This will be a case of "output-based financing," rewarding those who generate and share useful and usable knowledge. Communities of practice with vague or input and/or process-focused proposals will not be funded. This will entail revising the current purpose and structure of the sector and thematic biannual reports.
  - Require the communities of practice to more purposefully engage in external partnerships, including especially the regional knowledge hubs that ADB finances. (Engaging nonregional knowledge hubs is to be considered as well.)
  - The role of the knowledge management coordinators in ADB will be reviewed and ways to harness their knowledge, skills, experience, and interests in the form of a community of practice in knowledge management will be proposed.

(iii) **Strengthen External Knowledge Partnerships.** Knowledge networks facilitate information exchange toward practice-related goals. ADB will need to further augment internal knowledge sharing through communities of practice by strengthening its knowledge networking and partnerships with external institutions within and outside Asia and the Pacific. Through such external knowledge networking, ADB can share insights

from its development financing practices with external partners and benefit from knowledge generated by others. Significantly, external knowledge networking enables ADB to serve one of its core roles as a multilateral development bank—to promote learning and innovation for the benefits of developing member countries.

ADB decided early to encourage research and networking on innovative knowledge products and services. This led it to establish seven regional knowledge hubs under regional technical assistance in 2005.<sup>9</sup> These hubs are expected to facilitate learning and dissemination, exchange, and sharing of knowledge with and among developing member countries including South–South cooperation. It is important that ADB make them work effectively, including by tasking and using them itself. Other thematic and sector knowledge networking arrangements are through the Asian Development Bank Institute, Economics and Research Department, Office of Regional Economic Integration, and Regional and Sustainable Development Department. The operations departments have also initiated strategic and policy research partnerships with institutes in and outside the region.

A framework for knowledge partnerships that focus on the region's future development needs must be established—based on Strategy 2020's overarching goal of an Asia and Pacific region that is free of poverty and to meet the Millennium Development Goals. The Regional and Sustainable Development Department reviewed the performance of the regional knowledge hubs in 2008. That review concluded that knowledge partnerships should be based on a better understanding of the forms and functions of networks, and clear definition of expected outputs and outcomes in response to needs. It should also be understood that networks that tie developing member countries to other developing member countries do exist: ADB needs to position itself to add value accordingly. Additionally, it is crucial to foster closer links between ADB's communities of practice, the knowledge and operations departments, and relevant external knowledge partners. Accordingly, the following actions/outputs are proposed:

- Develop criteria for the selection of external knowledge networks including nonregional institutions (from ADB's member countries). Key criteria include (a) the three strategic directions under Strategy 2020 (namely, inclusive socioeconomic growth, environmentally sustainable growth, and regional cooperation and integration); (b) the priority sectors and thematic areas; and (c) the research priorities established under the Technical Assistance Strategic Forum.
- Ensure that expected outputs and outcomes are strategically aligned to ADB and developing member country priorities, specified during the selection process, and include requisite support from the relevant communities of practice. For hubs located in developing member countries, the active involvement of the resident missions is strongly recommended. Most importantly, highlight a few well-focused performance and "output and outcome" targets that knowledge hubs know they will be held accountable for delivering against.

<sup>9</sup> See [www.adb.org/documents/tars/reg/39201-reg-tar.pdf](http://www.adb.org/documents/tars/reg/39201-reg-tar.pdf)

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Box continued

- Make sure that agreements with knowledge networks spell out the need to conduct proactive dissemination activities in ADB and its developing member countries, and encourage the networks to disseminate ADB's knowledge products too.
- Consider knowledge partnerships when ADB enters into agreements with other institutions through documents such as letters of intent and memorandums of understanding.

(iv) **Further Enhance Staff Learning and Skills Development.**

The ability of ADB and all staff to learn is a precondition to the success of Strategy 2020. Engaging all staff in knowledge management is crucial to generating and sharing knowledge. Yet mainstreaming knowledge management in ADB takes time and resources. Staff learning and development should be reflected in annual performance and development plan reviews. This is included in the Human Resources Action Plan.<sup>p</sup> Staff need not only update technical and professional skills but must also acquire and master methods and techniques specifically for knowledge management.<sup>q</sup> The Budget, Personnel, and Management Systems Department has already begun to review ADB's staff learning and development program. The following actions/outputs will complement the ongoing work:

- Design and implement a focused (and needs-based) knowledge management and learning program for all staff, including those in resident missions and representative offices. This program would be jointly developed by the Knowledge Management Center and the Budget, Personnel, and Management Systems Department and involve the communities of practice.
- Introduce the concept of "sabbatical" in the current "Special Leave Without Pay" arrangement that is based on merits and focused on results, to encourage staff to compete for external learning and knowledge-sharing opportunities (and be recognized for their accomplishments).
- Invite a number of senior and junior researchers to ADB for short-term assignments in forward-looking studies that are aligned with the priorities of Strategy 2020, with nominations

subject to approval by the Vice-Presidency for Knowledge Management and Sustainable Development.

- Increase the budget for external training for administration by the Vice-Presidents.
- Capture the knowledge and experience of departing staff, especially retiring members, through exit debriefings and participation in the induction program.

These actions/outputs are intended to incorporate knowledge management and learning into ADB's learning and development program, and to enhance knowledge sharing.

The overall goal is to ensure that ADB's activities are henceforth based on more innovative and creative approaches that meet the changing needs of developing member countries.

**Next Steps**

The actions/outputs proposed above are practical, incremental, and supportive of Strategy 2020. Several of them are already under way. A critical next step to ensure continuing and effective implementation is to incorporate all firmly in ADB's Work Program and Budget Framework (2010–2012). As noted at the beginning of this paper, knowledge management is a bank-wide agenda, and all departments and offices are to be actively involved in implementing the actions/outputs proposed. Another critical step is to set up a system that monitors and reports on the implementation progress, with a particular focus on "results" and what is actually happening that is different. As the corporate focal point, the Knowledge Management Center will serve this function in collaboration with other relevant departments and offices.<sup>r</sup> The center will facilitate and monitor action plan implementation and report annually through the Regional and Sustainable Development Department to the Vice-Presidency for Knowledge Management and Sustainable Development, and subsequently to the Senior Management Team. The annual report on implementation progress will highlight implementation issues and propose remedial measures and follow-up actions/outputs for Management endorsement. These will be incorporated into subsequent annual budgets and work plans for implementation and continuing monitoring.

<sup>p</sup> ADB. 2009. *Human Resources Action Plan*. Manila. Available: [www.adb.org/documents/others/in58-09.pdf](http://www.adb.org/documents/others/in58-09.pdf)

<sup>q</sup> The Knowledge Management Center began to publicize knowledge management and learning tools in October 2008: the *Knowledge Solutions* series offers tools, methods, and approaches to propel development forward and enhance its effects; the *Knowledge Showcase* series disseminates innovative ideas and good practices from ADB and other operations; *Learning for Change in ADB* articulates timely, practical guidance to support and energize ADB's organization, people, knowledge, and technology for learning.

<sup>r</sup> Year-on-year monitoring of the progress toward the directions of change will be assessed. This will be effected through the annual budget planning exercise in consultation with the Budget, Personnel, and Management Systems Department and the Strategy and Policy Department.

## Appendix: Results Framework for the Action Plan

**Impact:**<sup>a</sup> The capacity of ADB and its developing member countries to reduce poverty is enhanced.

**Primary Outcomes:**<sup>b</sup> (i) an improved management system; (ii) improved business processes and information technology solutions for knowledge capture, enrichment, storage, and retrieval; (iii) improved organizational culture for knowledge sharing; (iv) well-functioning communities of practice; and (v) expanded knowledge sharing, learning, and dissemination through external relations and networking.

**Responsibility Centers:** All knowledge and operations departments; Asian Development Bank Institute; Budget, Personnel, and Management Systems Department; Community of Practice Committees; Economics and Research Department; Office of Cofinancing Operations; Office of the General Counsel; Office of Regional Economic Integration; Regional and Sustainable Development Department; and Strategy and Policy Department

Outcome Indicator	Action/Output	Complementary Measures Contributing to Action/Output	Assumptions and Risks <sup>c</sup>
First Pillar Statement: The Knowledge Focus in ADB's Operations is Sharpened			
At the regional level, ADB is increasingly recognized as a lead policy advisor, notably through the knowledge agenda that its technical assistance for research and development advances.	Coordination of the Technical Assistance Strategic Forum is improved.	Business process improvements <sup>d</sup>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Strong commitment by the Senior Management Team</li><li>• ADB values adjust in support of knowledge management and learning</li><li>• Close coordination among offices and departments</li><li>• Availability of adequate resources</li></ul>
At the country level, country partnership strategies guide medium-term operational programming with a focus on results and development effectiveness.	Country partnership strategies make explicit reference to knowledge management. <sup>e</sup>	Business process improvements	
At the project level, key documents embody quality, knowledge, and innovation.	Project processing documents for lending and technical assistance operations incorporate the knowledge, lessons, and insights of similar situations, display innovative features, and lend themselves to learning and knowledge sharing. <sup>f</sup>	Business process improvements	
Second Pillar Statement: The Communities of Practice are Empowered			
Communities of practice become an integral part of ADB's business processes.	Participation in communities of practice is encouraged and recognized.	Business process and information technology improvements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Availability of staff capabilities (experience, competencies, and technical and professional skills)</li><li>• Staff attitudes (values and beliefs about innovation, commitment, and flexibility) adjust in support of knowledge management and learning</li></ul>
Output-based financing rewards communities of practice that generate and share useful and usable knowledge.	The budgets of communities of practice are increased based on a clear set of objectives and measurable outcomes of improved knowledge management.	Budgetary allocation	
The communities of practice engage more purposefully in external partnerships.	Partnerships are struck between communities of practice and regional (and nonregional) knowledge hubs.	Business process and information technology improvements, budgetary allocation	
The contributions of the knowledge management coordinators in ADB are enhanced.	Terms of reference for knowledge management coordinators are drawn and a community of practice in knowledge management is proposed.	Business process improvement, budgetary allocation	

*continued on next page*

Table continued

Outcome Indicator	Action/Output	Complementary Measures Contributing to Action/Output	Assumptions and Risks <sup>c</sup>
Third Pillar Statement: External Knowledge Partnerships are Strengthened			
The selection of external knowledge networks is improved.	Criteria for the selection of external knowledge networks are developed. <sup>g</sup>	Business process improvement, budgetary allocation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Staff behaviors (performance, productivity, teamwork, and cooperation) adjust in support of knowledge management and learning</li></ul>
Outputs and outcomes of external knowledge networks are strategically aligned to ADB and developing member country priorities.	Expected outputs and outcomes are specified with support from the communities of practice and resident missions.	Business process improvement	
The external knowledge networks disseminate knowledge products proactively.	Agreements spell out proactive dissemination activities.	Business process improvement, budgetary allocation	
ADB’s partnerships agreements encourage knowledge partnerships.	Letters of intent and memorandums of understanding consider knowledge partnerships.	Business process improvement	
Fourth Pillar Statement: Staff Learning and Skills Development are Enhanced Further			
Staff skills in knowledge management and learning are developed.	A focused (and needs-based) knowledge management and learning program is designed.	Business process improvement, budgetary allocation	
Staff are encouraged to pursue learning and knowledge-sharing opportunities when on special leave.	The concept of a results-based and competitive sabbatical is introduced.	Business process improvement	
Research in priority areas of Strategy 2020 is boosted.	Senior and junior researchers are invited to conduct short-term, forward-looking studies.	Business process improvement, budgetary allocation	
Opportunities for external training are expanded.	The budget for external training is increased.	Budgetary allocation	
The tacit knowledge of departing staff is captured to drive organizational performance improvement.	The knowledge and experience of departing staff are captured through exit debriefings and participation in the induction program.	Business process improvement	

Source: Author.

<sup>a</sup> The impact targeted is that indicated in Knowledge Management in ADB.

<sup>b</sup> The primary outcomes supported are those listed in Knowledge Management in ADB.

<sup>c</sup> The assumptions and risks identified apply across the four pillars. *Learning for Change in ADB* specifies roadblocks to learning and identifies 10 challenges that ADB can overcome to minimize the risks listed.

<sup>d</sup> A business process is a collection of related, structured activities or tasks that produce a specific service or product for a particular client. In ADB, business processes are revised from time to time, typically to strengthen (i) the country ownership in ADB operations; (ii) the partnerships ADB develops with national and international development partners; (iii) ADB's capacity to more effectively engage with civil society; and (iv) ADB's capacity to provide a wider range of services, including knowledge products and services, to developing member countries. Examples of what business process improvements might be called for in relation to some actions/outputs are given in footnotes below. In most instances, their definition will require consultations between the Budget, Personnel, and Management Systems Department, the Regional and Sustainable Development Department, and the Strategy and Policy Department.

<sup>e</sup> This will likely entail a revision of the Board document template for preparation of country partnership strategies.

<sup>f</sup> This will likely entail a revision of the Board document template for preparation of reports and recommendations of the President, technical assistance reports, etc.

<sup>g</sup> This will likely entail preparation of guidelines on designing knowledge partnerships for collaborative advantage.



## FURTHER READING

- ADB. 2009a. Communities of Practice. *In Focus Series*. Manila. Available: [www.adb.org/media/infocus/2009/communities-practice.asp](http://www.adb.org/media/infocus/2009/communities-practice.asp)
- . 2009b. *Learning for Change in ADB*. Manila. Available: [www.adb.org/documents/books/learning-for-change/learning-for-change.pdf](http://www.adb.org/documents/books/learning-for-change/learning-for-change.pdf)

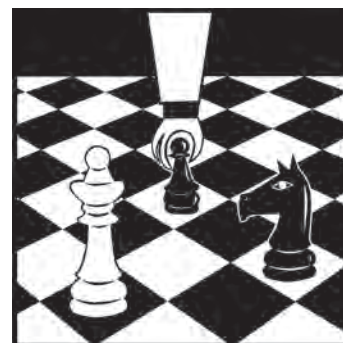


### STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT

A strategy is a long-term plan of action designed to achieve a particular goal.

# From Strategy to Practice

Strategic reversals are quite commonly failures of execution. In many cases, a strategy is abandoned out of impatience or because of pressure for an instant payoff before it has had a chance to take root and yield results. Or its focal point is allowed to drift over time. To navigate a strategy, one must maintain a balance between strategizing and learning modes of thinking.



## PREAMBLE

Despite worldwide attention to strategic planning, the notion of strategic practice is surprisingly new. This owes to widespread perception that strategic reversals owe to strategic miscalculations—the strategy was not sufficiently perceptive, imaginative, or visionary. Alternatively, it was too much of a good thing. But the truth is that strategic reversals are quite commonly failures of execution. In many cases, a strategy is abandoned out of impatience or because of pressure for an instant payoff before it has had a chance to take root and yield results. Or, its focal point is allowed to drift over time.

To draw a strategy is relatively easy but to execute it is difficult. Strategy is both a macro and a micro phenomenon that depends on synchronization. For that reason, it is worthwhile to examine a few elements of a disciplined process for systematically reviewing, evaluating, prioritizing, sequencing, managing, redirecting, and, if necessary, even canceling strategic initiatives.

## SCENARIO THINKING

Strategic planning stands for the unrelenting process of making decisions systematically with the greatest intelligence of their futurity, organizing the efforts necessary to carry them out, and measuring outcomes against expectations with feedback and self-control. The short term calls for strategic decisions as much as the long term. However, planning must take account of unpredictability and should not stake everything on one possible scenario. It must develop a small set of distinct scenarios covering the main areas of uncertainty and all plausible futures.

**“Unless a variety of opinions are laid before us, we have no opportunity of selection, but are bound of necessity to adopt the particular view which may have been brought forward.”**

— Herodotus

A scenario is an internally consistent view of the future. Scenario thinking is the process of generating and analyzing a small set of different futures. In discrete steps, it (i) reveals the focal issue, (ii) characterizes factors and players, (iii) lists driving forces, (iv) ranks driving forces, (v) fleshes out scenarios, (vi) draws implications, and (vii) selects indicators. The end result of building scenarios is not an accurate prediction of tomorrow but better thinking about the future. Moreover, since scenarios provide a context for decisions, better thinking should lead to decisions that are more robust. As events unfold, it is necessary to continue to review whether plans fit the realities of environment, economy, society, polity, and technology. If they do not, how can one discard them, or at least stop devoting more resources to their perpetuation?

**“All this will not be finished in the first one hundred days. Nor will it be finished in the first one thousand days; nor in the life of this administration; nor even perhaps in our lifetime on this planet. But let us begin.”**

— John F. Kennedy

## NAVIGATING A STRATEGY

To navigate a strategy, one must maintain a balance between strategizing and learning modes of thinking. This is achieved by more skilful action within the environment, in which the aim to make sense of an environment one finds puzzling is balanced by adaptive learning.

Strategizing involves a vision, a goal, a blueprint for the future, and a plan on how to get there. In almost any field of human activity, the factors and players that interact to create both the present and the future are complex and numerous. They include market forces, globalization, regionalization, natural resources, information flows, media, culture, and governance. Theories call for abstractions; for that reason, they apply only in a few domains.

Learning adheres to the same principles as the process of evolution. The events that unfold suggest new hypotheses, based on which one decides on the next steps. In a state of uncertainty, there is little alternative to adaptation. Only through action can organizations and people participate and gather the experience that both sparks and is informed by the process of learning.

## STRATEGY AS PRACTICE

Execution is a process. It is not an action or a step and it rests on more people than strategy formulation. Strategy as practice means treating earnestly the habits of practitioners. It reconciles the dichotomy between strategy and learning.

Therefore, the practice perspective is concerned with managerial activity, that is to say, with how managers do strategy. There are exciting moments in this, such as the grasping of situations, the begetting of ideas, and the identification of opportunities. But there is also the daily fare, including the routine of planning and budgeting each year, the sitting in committees, the writing of official documents, and the making of presentations. Here, attention to detail and persistence counts as much as foresight: at all times, questions of suitability, feasibility, and acceptability must be asked and answered. It is best to factor in smaller steps, celebrate their achievement, and move sequentially. The practice perspective embodies concern for the effectiveness and efficiency of strategists and not just of organizations. It connects to structured thinking; building, organizing, and working teams; appraising options; creating support mechanisms; assigning and holding responsibilities and accountability; choosing the right metrics; planning delivery; monitoring results; evaluating performance; and managing stakeholders and communications. Strategies that are not deliverable are of no use. ■

## FURTHER READING

- ADB. 2006. *From Strategy to Practice: The Tonle Sap Initiative*. Manila. Available: [www.adb.org/documents/produced-under-ta/38071/38071-cam-dpta-01.pdf](http://www.adb.org/documents/produced-under-ta/38071/38071-cam-dpta-01.pdf)
- . 2009. *Learning for Change in ADB*. Manila. Available: [www.adb.org/documents/books/learning-for-change/default.asp](http://www.adb.org/documents/books/learning-for-change/default.asp)

**Table: Navigating a Strategy**

Strategizing		Learning
Predicting and Controlling	↔	Participating
Theorizing	↔	Experimenting
Choosing Directions	↔	Enabling Natural Selection
Solving Problems	↔	Building Capabilities
Challenging Others	↔	Listening to Others
Explaining	↔	Interpreting
Seeking the Truth	↔	Seeking What Works
Desiring the Future	↔	Trusting Fate

Source: Adapted from van der Heijden, Kees. 2004. Can Internally Generated Futures Accelerate Organizational Learning? *Futures*. 36. pp. 145–159.



### STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT

A strategy is a long-term plan of action designed to achieve a particular goal.

# The Future of Social Marketing

Social marketing is the use of marketing principles and techniques to effect behavioral change. It is a concept, process, and application for understanding who people are, what they desire, and then organizing the creation, communication, and delivery of products and services to meet their desires as well as the needs of society, and solve serious social problems.



## INTRODUCTION

Marketing is at a crossroads. Until 1960, when Theodore Levitt wrote *Marketing Myopia*,<sup>1</sup> it had not been considered a serious function of strategic management. From there, the discipline developed at such pace that *Marketing Management*,<sup>2</sup> Philip Kotler's classic textbook, is in its 13th edition counting 816 pages.

Organizations have never had such powerful information and communication technologies<sup>3</sup> with which to interact with clients, audiences, and partners; explore, find, capture, store, analyze, present, use, and exchange information data and information about them; and tailor products and services accordingly. Along with that, never before have end users expected to interface so closely with organizations and with one another to define and shape what they need. In its highest form, marketing is now considered a social process, composed of human behavior<sup>4</sup> patterns concerned with exchange of resources or values.<sup>5</sup> It is no longer a mere function used to increase business profits.

Tellingly, in the 2010s, the attention of public sector agencies, nongovernment organizations, and the private sector

is increasingly drawn to the potential of social marketing. In an age of climate change, environmental destruction, natural resource shortages, fast population growth, hunger and poverty, as well as insufficient social services, what contributions might marketing make? Expressly, some ask whether the tools of marketing can be used to promote public goods in areas other than public health, the traditional arena of social marketing.<sup>6</sup> Might, for instance, its applications help encourage wider socially and environmentally beneficial behavioral changes, promote protective behaviors, prevent risky behavior, increase use of community services, or facilitate the formulation and adoption of new policies and standards? The behavior, that is, not just of individual citizens but also of public sector agencies, nongovernment organizations, and the private sector.

## DEFINITION

The term "social marketing" was coined by Philip Kotler and Gerald Zaltman<sup>7</sup> in 1971. Drawing from bodies of knowledge such as psychology, sociology, anthropology, political science, and communication theory—with practical roots in advertising, public relations, and market research—it

<sup>1</sup> Theodore Levitt. 1960. *Marketing Myopia*. *Harvard Business Review*. July–August.

<sup>2</sup> Philip Kotler and Kevin Keller. 2008. *Marketing Management*. Prentice Hall. The topics covered brand equity, customer value analysis, database marketing, e-commerce, value networks, hybrid channels, supply chain management, segmentation, targeting, positioning, and integrated marketing communications.

<sup>3</sup> They encompass radio, television, cellular phones, computer and network hardware and software, satellite systems and so on, as well as the various services and applications associated with them, such as videoconferencing and distance learning.

<sup>4</sup> Human behavior is the population of behaviors exhibited by human beings under specific conditions and influenced by culture, values, ethics, rapport, authority, persuasion, coercion, attitudes, emotions, hypnosis, and/or genetics.

<sup>5</sup> The motivation to become involved in an exchange is to satisfy needs.

<sup>6</sup> Famously, as long ago as 1952, research psychologist Gerhart Wiebe posed the much-quoted question, "Why can't you sell brotherhood and rational thinking like you sell soap?" He then argued that the success of mass persuasion, in terms of motivating behavior, is a function of the audience member's experience with regard to five factors: (i) the force, (ii) the direction, (iii) the mechanism, (iv) the adequacy and compatibility, and (v) the distance. See Gerhart Wiebe. 1952. *Merchandising Commodities and Citizenship on Television*. *The Public Opinion Quarterly*. 15 (4). pp. 679–691.

<sup>7</sup> Philip Kotler and Gerald Zaltman. 1971. *Social Marketing: An Approach to Planned Social Change*. *Journal of Marketing*. 35. pp. 3–12.

**Figure 1: Types of Social Change by Time and Level of Society**

	Micro Level (Individual)	Group Level (Organization)	Macro Level (Society)
Short-Term Change	Behavior Change	Change in Norms (Administrative Change)	Policy Change
Long-Term Change	Lifestyle Change	Organizational Change	Sociocultural Evolution

Source: Adapted from Sidney Levy and Gerald Zaltman. 1975. *Marketing, Society, and Conflict*. Prentice Hall.

is the application of principles and techniques drawn from the commercial sector to influence a target audience to voluntarily accept, reject, modify, or abandon a behavior for the benefit<sup>8</sup> of individuals, groups, organizations, or society as a whole. Its intent is to create positive social change. It can be applied to promote merit products and services or to make a target audience avoid demerit products and services and thus promote its well-being.

### THE DIMENSIONS OF SOCIAL MARKETING

Some consider social marketing to do little but use the principles and practices of generic marketing to achieve noncommercial goals. This is an oversimplification: social marketing involves changing seemingly intractable behaviors in composite environmental, economic, social, political, and technological circumstances with (more often than not) quite limited resources. If the basic objective of corporate marketers is to satisfy shareholders, the bottom line for social marketers is to meet society's desire to improve quality of life.<sup>9</sup> This requires a long-term planning approach that moves beyond the individual end user to groups, organizations, and society, characterized in the figure below. Hence, the desired outcomes of social marketing are usually ambitious: the products are more complex, demand is diverse, the target groups are challenging, the necessary involvement of end users is greater, and competition is more varied. However, like generic marketing, behaviors are always the focus: social marketing is also based on the voluntary (but more difficult)<sup>10</sup> exchange of costs and benefits between two or

**“Always remember that you are absolutely unique. Just like everyone else.”**

—Margaret Mead

more parties. To this end, social marketing too proposes a useful framework for planning, a framework that social marketers can associate with other approaches at a time when global, regional, national, and local problems have become more critical. (The other approaches might include advocacy; mobilizing communities; building strategic alliances with public sector agencies, nongovernment organizations, and the private sector;<sup>11</sup> and influencing the media.) Unsurprisingly, besides public health,<sup>12</sup> social marketing is being applied in environmental,<sup>13</sup> economic,<sup>14</sup> and educational<sup>15</sup> fields, among others.

In the United Kingdom, the National Social Marketing Center has worked to clarify the salient features of social marketing. Building on work by Alan Andreasen in the United States, it has drawn social marketing benchmark criteria. They aim to ease understanding of the principles and techniques of social marketing, encourage consistency of approach leading to impact, uphold flexibility and creativity to tailor interventions to different needs, facilitate capture and sharing of transferable learning between interventions, and assist monitoring and evaluation of interventions. Other criteria, critical to successful interventions, might have been included, e.g., strategic planning, partnership and stakeholder engagement, monitoring and evaluation, etc. However, those that the National Social

<sup>8</sup> Behavior will change only if perceived benefits outweigh perceived costs.

<sup>9</sup> This does not mean that commercial marketers cannot contribute to achievement of social good.

<sup>10</sup> Social marketing asks target audiences to do something for which social marketers will not always be able to give immediate payback, or show them something in return, most importantly in the near term. In addition, they must usually concentrate on removing barriers to an activity while enhancing the benefits.

<sup>11</sup> Many social marketing issues are so complex that one organization cannot address them alone.

<sup>12</sup> Applications include cholesterol, tobacco prevention, safety, drug abuse, drinking and driving, seatbelt laws, nutrition, obesity, physical activity, HIV/AIDS, immunization, mental health, breast feeding, breast cancer screening, and family planning.

<sup>13</sup> Instances are pollution, energy conservation, clean air, safer water, recycling, and preservation of forests and national parks.

<sup>14</sup> Areas relate to attracting investors, revitalizing older cities, boosting job skills and training, and civic involvement.

<sup>15</sup> Cases in point are literacy and stay in school.

Marketing Center promotes are unique to social marketing. The criteria are

- **Orientation.** This implies a strong client orientation, with importance attached to understanding where the customer is starting from, e.g., their values, experiences, knowledge, beliefs, attitudes, and needs, and the social context in which they live and work.
- **Behavior.** This refers to a clear focus on understanding existing behavior and key influences upon it, alongside developing clear behavioral goals. These can be divided into actionable and measurable stages, phased over time.
- **Theory.** This connotes the use of behavioral theories to understand human behavior and to build programs around this understanding.
- **Insight.** This calls for gaining a deep understanding and insight into what moves and motivates people.
- **Exchange.** This rests on the use of the “exchange” concept—understanding what is being expected of people, and the real cost to them.
- **Competition.** This hinges on the use of the “competition” concept. This means understanding factors that impact on people and compete for their time.
- **Segmentation.** This demands that the audience be clarified using segmentation to target people effectively.
- **Methods Mix.** This requires the use of a mix of different interventions or methods to achieve a behavioral goal. When used at the strategic level this is referred to as the intervention mix. When used operationally, it is described as the marketing mix.

## THE IMPORTANCE OF PROCESS

The stages of the social marketing process will be familiar to anyone who has been involved in project or program development. However, the National Social Marketing Center highlights in particular the importance of the scoping stage—it drives the entire process. At the scoping stage, the primary concern is to establish clear, actionable, and measurable behavior goals to ensure focused development throughout the rest of the process. The effectiveness of social marketing rests on the demonstration of direct impact on behavior; it is this feature that sets social marketing distinctly apart from communication or awareness-raising approaches (where the main focus is on highlighting information and helping people understand it). The aim of the scoping part of the process is to define the objectives of the intervention and what the stakeholders want to achieve. This requires close engagement and much insight. At this stage, social marketers attempt to understand what moves and motivates the end users to determine how the behavioral goals might be reached. Referring to generic marketing, it might be useful to consider this stage as that when the product or service is defined.

The complexity of marketing a societal behavioral change requires that the process of social marketing be well structured. Yet, there may have been insufficient discussion of a step-by-step methodology for the social marketing process in the literature. The principal stages followed in public health applications in the United States are initial planning, formative research, strategy development, program development and pretesting of material and nonmaterial interventions,

**Table: Social Marketing Benchmark Criteria**

Criterion	Explanation
Orientation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A long-term outlook based on continuing programs rather than one-off campaigns underpins the intervention. The intervention should be strategic rather than tactical. Since the orientation is on relationships—and building a reputation takes time, authenticity, and consistency in words and actions—notions of branding are relevant.</li> <li>• A broad and robust understanding of the target group is developed that focuses on understanding everyday lives.</li> <li>• Formative research is used to identify the target group’s values, experiences, knowledge, beliefs, attitudes, and needs and build a relationship through participation at all stages in the development of the intervention.</li> <li>• A range of different qualitative and quantitative research techniques combining data from various primary and secondary sources is used to inform understanding.</li> </ul>
Behavior	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A broad and robust behavioral analysis is undertaken to gather a rounded picture of current behavioral patterns and trends for both the problem and desired behavior.</li> <li>• The intervention focuses on specific behaviors, not just information.</li> <li>• The intervention seeks to consider and address domains related to the formation and establishment of behavior, the maintenance and reinforcement of behavior, behavioral change, and behavioral controls based on ethical principles.</li> <li>• The intervention has specific actionable and measurable behavioral objectives and associated indicators.</li> </ul>
Theory	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An integrated and open theory framework is used.</li> <li>• Theory is used transparently to inform and guide development and theoretical assumptions to be tested as part of the social marketing process.</li> <li>• The social marketing process takes into account behavioral theory across four primary biophysical, psychological, social, and environmental or ecological domains.</li> </ul>

*continued on next page*

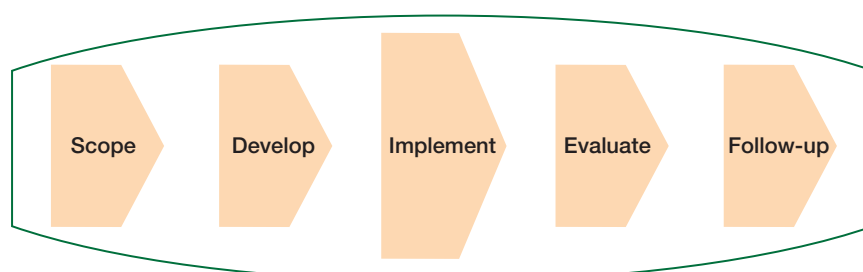
Table continued

Criterion	Explanation
Insight	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A focus is placed on gaining deeper understanding of what moves and motivates the target group. Social marketers conduct formative, process, and evaluative research to discover barriers to behavioral change and develop approaches that address them.</li> <li>The intervention is based on identifying and developing actionable insights using considered judgment.</li> </ul>
Exchange	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The intervention incorporates an exchange analysis of the full cost to the target group of achieving the proposed benefit. Costs can be financial, physical, social, etc.</li> <li>Incentives and disincentives are considered and tailored according to the target group, based on what it values. The exchange may be tangible or intangible.</li> </ul>
Competition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The internal and external forces that compete with the behavioral change are analyzed.</li> <li>Strategies aim to minimize the potential impact of competition by considering positive and problematic external influences and influencers.</li> <li>The factors that compete for the time and attention of the target group are considered.</li> </ul>
Segmentation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Traditional targeting, such as demographic, is used, but not relied on exclusively.</li> <li>Deeper segmented approaches are used that focus on what moves and motivates the target group, drawing on greater use of geographic, psychographic, and behavior-related data.</li> <li>The intervention is tailored to specific target group segments and does not rely on "blanket" approaches.</li> <li>Future lifestyle trends are considered and addressed.</li> </ul>
Methods Mix	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A range of methods, tailored to the selected target group segments, is used to establish an appropriate synergistic mix that avoids reliance on one-size-fits-all approaches.</li> <li>The strategic social marketing intervention considers four primary domains related to informing and encouraging, servicing and supporting, designing and adjusting the environment, and controlling and regulating.</li> <li>In operational social marketing, the intervention considers the best application of the marketing mix that consists of the four Ps of product (or service), place, price, and promotion.<sup>a</sup> An intervention that only uses promotion is social advertising, not social marketing.</li> <li>Elements of the intervention are pretested with the target group.</li> </ul>

<sup>a</sup> In social marketing, the product (or service) is the behavior being exchanged with the target audience for a price and benefit. It is not necessarily (indeed, not usually) a tangible item, and must compete successfully against what is being enjoyed from the current behavior. The place is where the target audience will perform the desired behavioral change (or where it may be thinking about the issue). To ease access, interventions should be moved to places that the target audience frequents, or when they perform the current behavior. The price is the cost or barriers the target audience faces in changing its behavior. The price can be financial, but the more important costs are social and emotional, e.g., time, effort, lifestyle, and psychological costs. Promotion relates to communication messages, materials, channels, and activities that will effectively reach the target audience about product (or service), place, and price variables. They include advertising, media relations, events, personal selling, entertainment, and direct mail. Social marketers may need to be very creative in the ways they promote products and services vis-à-vis sometimes hard-to-reach populations.

Source: Adapted from National Social Marketing Center. 2010. Available: [www.nsmcentre.org.uk/](http://www.nsmcentre.org.uk/)

**Figure 2: The Social Marketing Process**



Source: National Social Marketing Center. 2010. Available: [www.nsmcentre.org.uk/](http://www.nsmcentre.org.uk/)



### Box 1: A Quick Guide to Social Marketing

1. Take advantage of prior and existing successful campaigns.
2. Start with target markets most ready for action.
3. Promote single, simple, doable behaviors.
4. Identify and remove barriers to behavioral change.
5. Bring real benefits into the present.
6. Highlight costs of competing behaviors.
7. Promote a tangible product or service to help target audiences perform the behavior.
8. Consider nonmonetary incentives in the form of recognition and appreciation.
9. Have a little fun with messages.
10. Use media channels at the point of decision making.
11. Get commitments and pledges.
12. Use prompts for sustainability.

Source: Philip Kotler and Nancy Lee. 2007. *Marketing in the Public Sector: A Roadmap for Improved Performance*. Pearson Education, Inc.

Note: Messages should be vivid, personal, and concrete. They should be delivered by individuals or organizations that are credible. They should be framed to indicate what individuals are losing by not acting. If the messages are threatening, social marketers should make sure they are coupled with specific instructions for the actions to take. The instructions should clearly relate to the desired behavioral change and be specific. They should make it easy for people to remember what to do, how to do it, and when to do it.

### Box 2: Case Study: Tonle Sap Environmental Management—Formulating and Implementing a National Environmental Education and Awareness Campaign

Sustainable management and conservation of natural resources and biodiversity are a priority for Cambodia, which relies heavily on land, water, and biotic resources and is on the verge of rapid urban, industrial, and agricultural development. In such cases, environmental policies should be fitted to the conditions and traditions of the country. Implementation will not be successful without the active participation of all citizens, especially those who depend on natural resources.

When Cambodia nominated in 1996 the Tonle Sap for designation by the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization as a biosphere reserve, the government recognized that the site should respond to the conservation, development, and logistic functions of a biosphere reserve and that education and public awareness should be given importance. At the national level, information on conservation and sustainable use, as practiced in biosphere reserves, should be included in school programs and teaching manuals and in media efforts. At the local level, involvement of local communities should be encouraged, information for visitors should be produced, and environmental education centers should be promoted.

Since its creation in 1993, the Ministry of Environment has worked toward such ends. As a result, an Interministerial Steering Committee for Environmental Education was established that year with assistance from the United Nations Development Programme's Environmental Technical Assistance Project. The United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization was associated with related environmental education activities, particularly with

developing environmental education materials for school curricula and producing teacher guides for primary and secondary schools. A special program for educating monks was also put in place. However, many of these activities were interrupted when the Environmental Technical Assistance Project ended in 1998. Considering the importance of the Tonle Sap Biosphere Reserve and the severity of the threats against it, it is urgent that progress in environmental education and awareness continue and that a national campaign be mounted in support. This would also help Cambodia meet obligations under the 1992 Convention on Biological Diversity that stress the importance of education and public awareness on biodiversity.

The goal of the project is sustainable management and conservation of natural resources and biodiversity in the Tonle Sap basin. The objective that formulation and implementation of a national environmental education and awareness campaign will help accomplish is strengthened natural resource management coordination and planning for the Tonle Sap Biosphere Reserve, particularly by establishing a coordination framework and information dissemination mechanisms. The outputs needed to formulate and implement the campaign are as follows: (i) publicizing the Tonle Sap's environmental importance, (ii) integrating concern for natural resources, and (iii) developing formal and nonformal environmental education. These outputs will be defined by the target audience, i.e., the general public and the press, decision makers, schoolchildren (at primary and secondary levels), university students, and communities living in the Tonle Sap region.

Source: Extracted from ADB. 2002. *Report and Recommendation of the President to the Board of Directors on a Proposed Loan and Technical Assistance Grant to the Kingdom of Cambodia for the Tonle Sap Environmental Management Project*. Manila. Available: [www.adb.org/documents/rps/cam/rp\\_cam\\_33418.pdf](http://www.adb.org/documents/rps/cam/rp_cam_33418.pdf) More information on the Tonle Sap Initiative is at [www.adb.org/projects/tonle\\_sap/](http://www.adb.org/projects/tonle_sap/) See also Live & Learn Environmental Education. 2005. *Building a Sustainable Future: A Strategic Approach to Environmental Education in the Tonle Sap Region, Cambodia*. Available: [www.livelearn.org/resources/reports/basf-Cambodia.pdf](http://www.livelearn.org/resources/reports/basf-Cambodia.pdf)

implementation, and monitoring and evaluation. The core marketing principles, the four Ps, are at the heart of this process because they are used at the initial planning stage.

## SOCIAL MARKETING FOR A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE

Given the roots they share, both generic and social marketing have seen a move to relational capital and relationship marketing, away from transactional thinking. Somewhat belatedly, the private sector came to realize that it is easier, and more profitable, to retain clients than to continually attract new customers. Social marketing adopted that thinking earlier simply because it must embrace long-term strategic approaches. Indeed, the inescapable need for long-term thinking in social marketing and the related development of appropriate

principles and techniques now position it advantageously in the quickening fight against global, regional, national, and local problems.

In 2009, Philip Kotler and Nancy Lee contributed to expand the traditional scope of social marketing by considering global poverty, 90% of which is found in developing countries,<sup>16</sup> from the viewpoint of the marketer.<sup>17</sup> They examined how marketing perspectives might drive poverty solutions that work by (i) segmenting the poverty marketplace (who are the potential market segments for our efforts?); (ii) evaluating and

**“A small group of thoughtful people could change the world. Indeed, it’s the only thing that ever has.”**

— Margaret Mead

### Box 3: Case Study: Tonle Sap Sustainable Livelihoods— Educating for Protection of Natural Resources

In Cambodia, decentralization and deconcentration have boosted local autonomy and participation in national development. Accordingly, the structures supporting this effort—at central, provincial, district, and commune levels—have received considerable assistance. But, given their short history, the impact on improved livelihoods, though encouraging, has been modest: there remains a need to strengthen institutions and processes at all levels. This includes improving cross-sectoral linkages in development planning, building skills for community-driven development, and raising awareness of the need to protect natural resources. Component 3 of the project plans to build skills and awareness for sustainable livelihoods.

Specifically, to help raise awareness of the need to protect natural resources, the project will (i) assemble educational materials on natural resource management, including those developed under component 3 of the ADB-assisted Tonle Sap Environmental Management Project; (ii) hold environmental awareness forums for staff of the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, and Fisheries, Ministry of Environment, Ministry of Rural Development, Ministry of Women’s Affairs, their provincial departments, and commune leaders; (iii) prioritize villages according to their potential impact on resource extraction; (iv) assemble, train, and equip a mobile training team to extend environmental awareness in priority villages; (v) deliver the environmental awareness program; and (vi) conduct

monitoring and evaluation. The activities will build on achievements under component 1 of the Tonle Sap Environmental Management Project, according to the principles developed under an ADB-assisted pilot and demonstration activity conducted in 2004.<sup>a</sup>



Source: Live & Learn Environmental Education. 2006. *Good People, Good Environment: The Community Environment Awareness Flipchart*. Available: [www.livelearn.org/resources/manuals/comm%20flipchart\\_english.pdf](http://www.livelearn.org/resources/manuals/comm%20flipchart_english.pdf)

<sup>a</sup> See ADB. 2004. *Regional Technical Assistance for Promoting Effective Water Management Policies and Practices (Phase 3)*. Manila. Pilot and Demonstration Activity in the Kingdom of Cambodia for Developing and Testing Environmental Education and Awareness Methodologies and Tools. Available: [www.adb.org/documents/tars/reg/t\\_reg\\_6123\\_pda.pdf](http://www.adb.org/documents/tars/reg/t_reg_6123_pda.pdf) See also Live & Learn Environmental Education. 2004. *Environmental Issues in the Tonle Sap: A Rapid Assessment of Perceptions*. ([www.livelearn.org/research/rap%20-%20tonle%20sap%202004.pdf](http://www.livelearn.org/research/rap%20-%20tonle%20sap%202004.pdf)); *Learning Circle Facilitators’ Guide to Promote Sustainable Development in the Tonle Sap*. ([www.livelearn.org/resources/manuals/lc%20facilitators%20guide%20tonle%20sap.pdf](http://www.livelearn.org/resources/manuals/lc%20facilitators%20guide%20tonle%20sap.pdf)); *Community Theater Guide to the Water Awareness Program*. ([www.livelearn.org/resources/manuals/theatre%20guide.pdf](http://www.livelearn.org/resources/manuals/theatre%20guide.pdf))

Source: Extracted from ADB. 2005. *Report and Recommendation of the President to the Board of Directors on a Proposed Asian Development Fund Grant to the Kingdom of Cambodia for the Tonle Sap Sustainable Livelihoods Project*. Manila. Available: [www.adb.org/documents/rps/cam/39603-cam-rrp.pdf](http://www.adb.org/documents/rps/cam/39603-cam-rrp.pdf). More information on the Tonle Sap Initiative is at [www.adb.org/projects/tonle\\_sap/](http://www.adb.org/projects/tonle_sap/)

<sup>16</sup> Applying social marketing principles and techniques in developing countries is not new. Poverty is affected by behavioral choices, and behavior is influenced by the creation, communication, and delivery of products and services that modulate it. Therefore, from the 1980s organizations such as the World Bank started to use the term “social marketing” and have continued to promote interest in it. However, Philip Kotler and Nancy Lee’s book is a valuable addition to the toolbox of development aid. It describes and illustrates with actual cases the major steps in planning, implementing, monitoring, evaluating, and controlling social marketing programs for poverty reduction; this level of analysis had been missing in all the previous work on helping the poor.

<sup>17</sup> Philip Kotler and Nancy Lee. 2009. *Up and Out of Poverty*. Pearson Education, Inc.

choosing target market priorities (who should we focus on first or most?); (iii) determining desired behavior changes (what do we want them to do?); (iv) understanding barriers, benefits, and the competition for change (what do they think of the idea?); and (v) developing a desired positioning and strategic marketing

mix (what do they need to do this?). They stressed the need to ensure an integrated approach by developing a social marketing plan and elucidating the distinct roles of the public sector, nongovernment organizations, and the private sector in poverty reduction. ■

## Box 4: Outline of Social Marketing Planning

### Executive Summary

A brief summary highlighting plan stakeholders, background, purpose, target audience, major marketing objectives and goals, desired positioning, marketing mix strategies (4Ps), and evaluation, budget, and implementation plans.

#### 1.0 Background, Purpose, and Focus

Who's the sponsor? Why are they doing this? What social issue and population will the plan focus on, and why?

#### 2.0 Situation Analysis

2.1 SWOT: Organizational Strengths and Weaknesses, and Environmental Opportunities and Threats

2.2 Literature review and environmental scan of programs focusing on similar efforts: activities and lessons learned

#### 3.0 Target Audience Profile

3.1 Demographics, geographics, relevant behaviors (including risk), psychographics, social networks, community assets, and stage of change (readiness to buy)

3.2 Size of target audience

#### 4.0 Marketing Objectives and Goals

4.1 Campaign objectives: specifying targeted behaviors and attitudes (knowledge and beliefs)

4.2 SMART goals: Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound changes in behaviors and attitudes

#### 5.0 Factors Influencing Adoption of the Behavior

5.1 Perceived barriers to the targeted behavior

5.2 Potential benefits of the targeted behavior

5.3 Competing behaviors and forces

5.4 Influence of important others

#### 6.0 Positioning Statement

How do we want the target audience to see the targeted behavior and its benefits relative to alternative or preferred ones?

#### 7.0 Marketing Mix Strategies (Using the 4Ps to Create, Communicate, and Deliver Value for the Behavior)

7.1 Product: Benefits from performing behaviors and any products or services offered to assist adoption

Core Product: Desired audience benefits promised in exchange for performing the targeted behavior

Actual Product: Features of basic product or service, e.g., HIV/AIDS test, exercise, number of daily fruits and vegetables

Augmented Product: Additional products and services to help perform the behavior or increase appeal

7.2 Price: Costs that will be associated with adopting the behavior and any monetary and nonmonetary incentives and disincentives

Costs: Money, time, physical effort, psychological

Price-Related Tactics to Reduce Costs: Monetary and nonmonetary incentives and disincentives

7.3 Place: Making access convenient

Creating convenient opportunities to engage in the targeted behaviors and/or access products and services

7.4 Promotion: Persuasive communications highlighting product or service benefits, features, fair price, and ease of access

Messages

Messenger

Creative and Executional Strategy

Media Channels and Promotional Items

*continued on next page*

Box 4 continued

**8.0 Plan for Monitoring and Evaluation**

- 8.1 Purpose and audience for monitoring and evaluation
- 8.2 What will be measured: inputs, outputs, outcomes, and impact
- 8.3 How and when measures will be taken

**9.0 Budget**

- 9.1 Costs for implementing marketing plan, including additional research and monitoring and evaluation plan
- 9.2 Any anticipated incremental revenues, cost savings, or partner contributions

**10.0 Plan for Implementation and Campaign Management**

Who will do what and when, including partners and their roles?

Source: Philip Kotler and Nancy Lee. 2009. *Up and Out of Poverty*. Pearson Education, Inc.

Note: Other downloadable planning documents for prioritizing target audiences, determining desired behaviors, identifying audience barriers, using the 4 Ps for reducing audience barriers, and developing a comprehensive social marketing plan are at Up and Out of Poverty. 2010. Available: [www.upandoutofpoverty.com/](http://www.upandoutofpoverty.com/)

**FURTHER READING**

- Philip Kotler and Gerald Zaltman. 1971. Social Marketing: An Approach to Planned Social Change. *Journal of Marketing*. 35. pp. 3–12.
- Philip Kotler and Nancy Lee. 2007. *Marketing in the Public Sector: A Roadmap for Improved Performance*. Pearson Education, Inc.
- . 2009. *Up and Out of Poverty*. Pearson Education, Inc.
- Turning Point. 2010. Available: [www.turningpointprogram.org/index.html](http://www.turningpointprogram.org/index.html)

**STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT**

A strategy is a long-term plan of action designed to achieve a particular goal.

# Learning Lessons with Knowledge Audits<sup>1</sup>

Knowledge from evaluations will not be used effectively if the specific organizational context, knowledge, and relationships of evaluation agencies, and the external environment they face, are not dealt with in an integrated and coherent manner. Knowledge management can shed light on this and related initiatives can catalyze and facilitate identification, creation, storage, sharing, and use of lessons.



## INTRODUCTION

Most development agencies have committed to become learning organizations. But the use of evaluation for learning may be less important than that of other inputs, such as self-evaluation and training, and evaluation results may only marginally support policy, strategy, and operational changes. In 2006, the Independent Evaluation Department (IED) in the Asian Development Bank determined to apply knowledge management to lesson learning. In 2007, it formulated a strategic framework to improve the organizational culture, management system, business processes, information technology solutions, community of practice, and external relations and networking for that. These *Knowledge Solutions* explain the strategic framework. They also describe the knowledge audit methodology developed to tie in with the department's audiences. The online, questionnaire-based survey of perceptions conducted as a first exercise that year provided ready and multiple entry points against which the department can take measures to that intent, as well as a comprehensive baseline assessment against which to judge progress. Fundamentally, these *Knowledge Solutions* contend that evaluation agencies should move from "make-and-sell," at the simplest level, to "sense-and-respond" in ways that are increasingly satisfying to stakeholders. Knowledge from evaluations will not be used effectively if the specific organizational context, knowledge, and relationships of evaluation agencies, and the external environment they face, are not dealt with in an integrated and coherent manner.

Knowledge management can shed light on possible operating frameworks for this and knowledge management initiatives can be applied to catalyze and facilitate identification, creation, storage, sharing, and use of lessons. That would be knowledge utilization indeed.

## KNOWLEDGE, RELATIONSHIPS, CONTEXT, AND EXTERNAL ENVIRONMENT

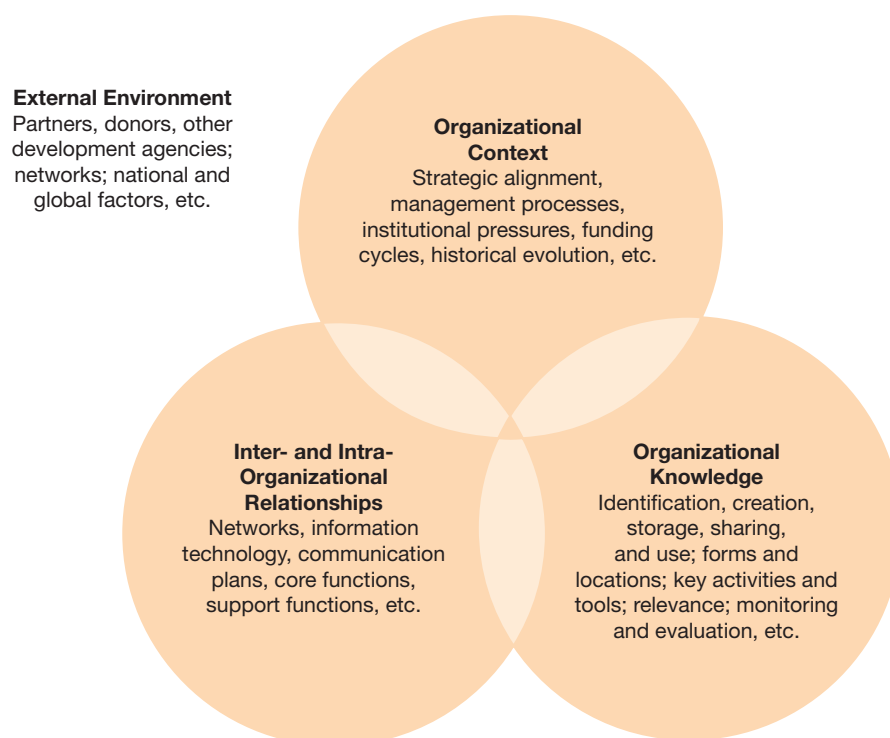
Knowledge must not be seen as something that is supplied from one person to another, or from better-off countries to developing countries, but rather as something that can flow back and forth and be continually improved, adapted, and refreshed using knowledge management tools. What is more, the latter are more effective where the specific knowledge, relationships, and context of organizations and the external environment they face are dealt with in an integrated and coherent manner. Figure 1 demonstrates the importance of using knowledge management tools with respect to the specific milieu in which an institution operates. The framework, formulated by the Overseas Development Institute to analyze and compare processes of change in a holistic manner, is applicable to other development agencies and, with small adjustments, to organizations in general.

## AUDIENCES

Evaluations are conducted to find out what results are being achieved, what improvements should be considered, and what is being learned. In ADB, this is done with systematic and impartial assessment of policies, strategies, partnerships,

<sup>1</sup> These *Knowledge Solutions* abridge a paper on the same subject presented at the Malaysian Evaluation Society's Third International Evaluation Conference held from 31 March to 4 April 2008 in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

**Figure 1: A Holistic View of Knowledge and Knowledge Management Tools**



Source: Adapted from Ramalingam, Ben. 2005. Implementing Knowledge Strategies: Lessons from International Development Agencies. *Working Paper 244*. Overseas Development Institute. Available: [www.odi.org.uk/rapid/publications/documents/wp244.pdf](http://www.odi.org.uk/rapid/publications/documents/wp244.pdf)

programs, and projects, including their design, implementation, and results. Sharing lessons<sup>2</sup> also demonstrates good governance and advances understanding of what an organization aims to accomplish, thereby generating support for it. Figure 2 illustrates the principal audiences for evaluations, using ADB as an example.

## INTERFACES

In the case of ADB, inter- and intra-organizational relationships encompass IED itself, other departments,<sup>3</sup> developing member countries, and the international evaluation community. Figure 3 shows these primary interfaces with the specific organizational context, knowledge, and relationships of IED and the external environment it faces to structure entry points for lesson learning.

## ARCHITECTURE

Knowledge management must be embedded into all of an organization's business processes. It is not an activity delivered exclusively by a distinct business unit or a particular process. An architecture must be built to initiate and implement

organization-wide knowledge management initiatives. Here, four pillars are critical to success. They are: (i) leadership, (ii) organization, (iii) technology, and (iv) learning. Table 1 outlines the core functions, typical activities, and implementation elements of a stable architecture for lesson learning.

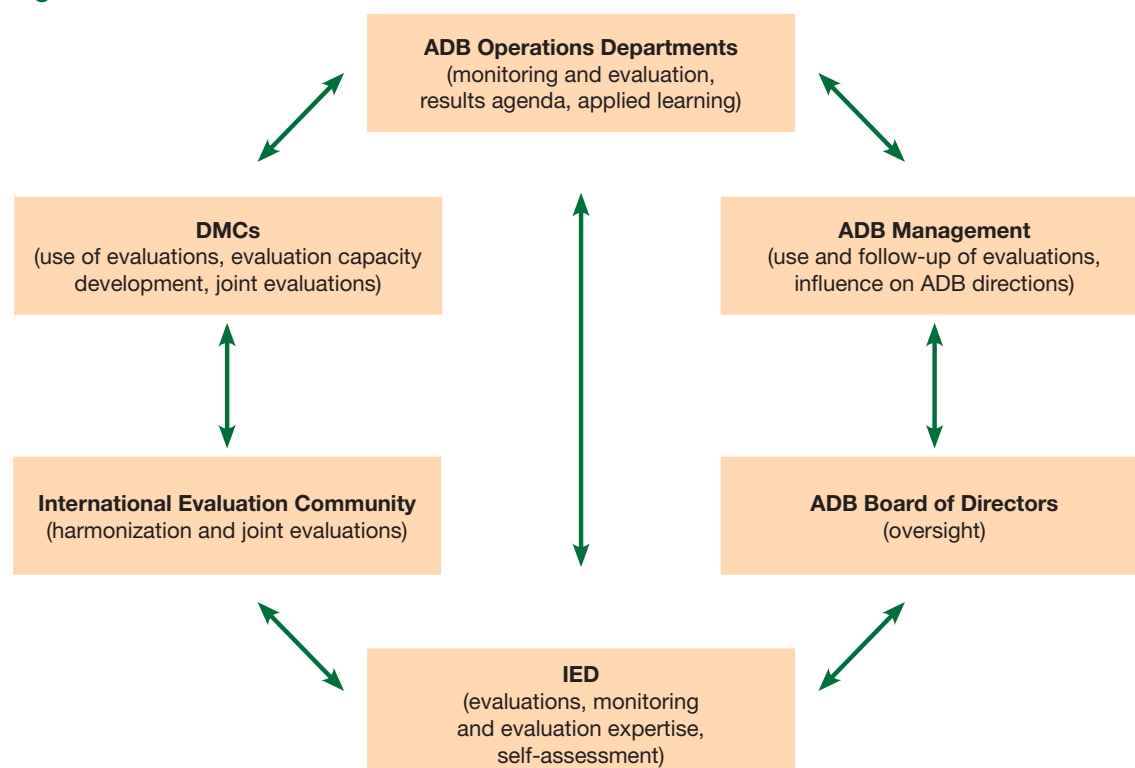
**“As man is a being very sparingly furnished with the power of prescience, he can provide for the future only by considering the past; and as futurity is all in which he has any real interest, he ought very diligently to use the only means by which he can be enabled to enjoy it, and frequently to revolve the experiments which he has hitherto made upon life, that he may gain wisdom from his mistakes, and caution from his miscarriages.”**

—Samuel Johnson

<sup>2</sup> Lessons are of two types: operational and developmental. Operational lessons relate, among others, to performance measurement, aid coordination, resource requirements, team building and coordination, procurement practices, delivery and reporting systems, and logistics. Developmental lessons pertain to realization of development results, improvement of developmental practice, and delivery on priorities.

<sup>3</sup> In large measure, these are operations departments. But IED also interacts with non-operations departments and offices, including the Asian Development Bank Institute, the Economics and Research Department, the Regional and Sustainable Development Department, and the Strategy and Policy Department.



**Figure 2: Audiences for Evaluations**


ADB = Asian Development Bank, DMCs = developing member countries, IED = Independent Evaluation Department.

Source: Adapted from Independent Evaluation Group—World Bank. 2006. *2006 Annual Report on Operations Evaluation*. Washington, DC: World Bank.

**Table 1: Architecture for Lesson Learning**

Pillar	Function	Typical Activity	Illustrative Implementation Element
Leadership	Drive values for knowledge management.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify knowledge critical to learning lessons in ADB.</li> <li>Conduct work-centered analysis.</li> <li>Plan high-level strategic approach.</li> <li>Establish goal and prioritize objectives.</li> <li>Define requirements and develop measurement program.</li> <li>Promote values and norms.</li> <li>Implement strategy.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strategic planning</li> <li>Vision sharing</li> <li>Definition of goal and objectives</li> <li>Executive commitment</li> <li>Knowledge management programs tied to metrics</li> <li>Formal knowledge management roles in existence</li> <li>Tangible rewards for use of knowledge management</li> <li>Encouragement, recognition, and reward for knowledge sharing</li> <li>Communications</li> </ul>
Organization	Organize to support values for knowledge management.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify critical knowledge gaps, opportunities, and risks.</li> <li>Develop business process model.</li> <li>Engage key audiences with incentives.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Organizational structure</li> <li>Organizational culture</li> <li>Business process workflows</li> <li>Business process re-engineering</li> <li>Management by objectives</li> <li>Total quality management</li> <li>Operating procedures for knowledge sharing</li> <li>Knowledge performance metrics</li> <li>Communications</li> </ul>

*continued on next page*



Table 1 *continued*

Pillar	Function	Typical Activity	Illustrative Implementation Element
Technology	Collect and connect knowledge.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Enhance system integration and access.</li> <li>Deploy intelligent agents for people.</li> <li>Exploit semantic technologies.</li> <li>Reuse existing capabilities in new ways.</li> <li>Monitor, measure, and report knowledge performance metrics.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Email</li> <li>Data warehousing</li> <li>Data management software</li> <li>Multimedia repositories</li> <li>Groupware</li> <li>Decision support systems</li> <li>Intranet</li> <li>Search engines</li> <li>Business modeling systems</li> <li>Intelligent agents</li> <li>Neural networks</li> <li>Lessons learned systems</li> <li>Video conferencing</li> <li>Communications</li> </ul>
Learning	Cultivate and utilize virtual teams and exchange forums for knowledge management.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Enliven collaboration.</li> <li>Facilitate communities of practice.</li> <li>Encourage storytelling.</li> <li>Recognize and reward knowledge sharing.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tacit and explicit knowledge</li> <li>Capturing, organizing, and disseminating knowledge</li> <li>Team learning</li> <li>Management support for continuous learning</li> <li>Virtual teams</li> <li>Exchange forums</li> <li>Communities of practice</li> <li>Encouragement, recognition, and reward for innovation</li> <li>Communications</li> </ul>

Source: ADB. 2007. *Learning Lessons in ADB*. Manila. Available: [www.adb.org/documents/reports/learning-lessons-adb/strategic-framework-2007-2009.asp](http://www.adb.org/documents/reports/learning-lessons-adb/strategic-framework-2007-2009.asp)

## KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT TOOLS

Learning lessons is contingent on improving organizational performance in five areas of competence. They are (i) strategy development, (ii) management techniques, (iii) collaboration mechanisms, (iv) knowledge sharing and learning, and (v) knowledge capture and storage.<sup>4</sup> Sundry knowledge management tools can support endeavors in each area, including, for example, knowledge audits, activity-based knowledge mapping, action learning sets, peer assists, and exit interviews. Conspicuously, the advent of the internet has brought information technologies that complement and supplement the knowledge management tools at hand to make knowledge flow more effectively around and across organizations. The technologies include e-learning, web conferencing, collaborative software, content management systems, Yellow Pages, e-mail lists, wikis, and web logs (blogs). Where an organization might aim to be in specified time and the priority areas of competence that it might therefore decide to focus on can be investigated by means of such diagnostic tools.

## PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER: THE STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

Drawing the elements of knowledge, relationships, context, and external environment; audiences; interfaces; architecture; and knowledge management tools in a conceptual structure generates the operating framework within which decisions on knowledge management initiatives can be taken and implemented. Figure 4 depicts the operating framework within which knowledge management tools are leveraged by IED for lesson learning in ADB. The operating framework and the performance regime that drive it are to be reviewed every 3 years.

## BUSINESS PLANNING

Organizations looking to knowledge management develop business plans that are aligned with their goal and objectives. To raise knowledge vigilance to the point where attitudes are realistic and automatic, and tacit knowledge is internalized, such plans usually identify needs and issues within the

<sup>4</sup> Chris Collison and Geoff Parcell. 2001. *Learning to Fly: Practical Knowledge Management from Leading and Learning Organizations*. Capstone Publishing. The Five Competencies Framework helps to determine priorities for immediate action by selecting the area that will yield the greatest benefits if improved.

**Figure 3: Interfaces for Lesson Learning**

	IED-IED	IED-ADB	IED-DMCs	IED - International Evaluation Community
Organizational Context				
Organizational Knowledge				
Inter- and Intra-Organizational Relationships				
External Environment				

ADB = Asian Development Bank, DMCs = developing member countries, IED = Independent Evaluation Department.

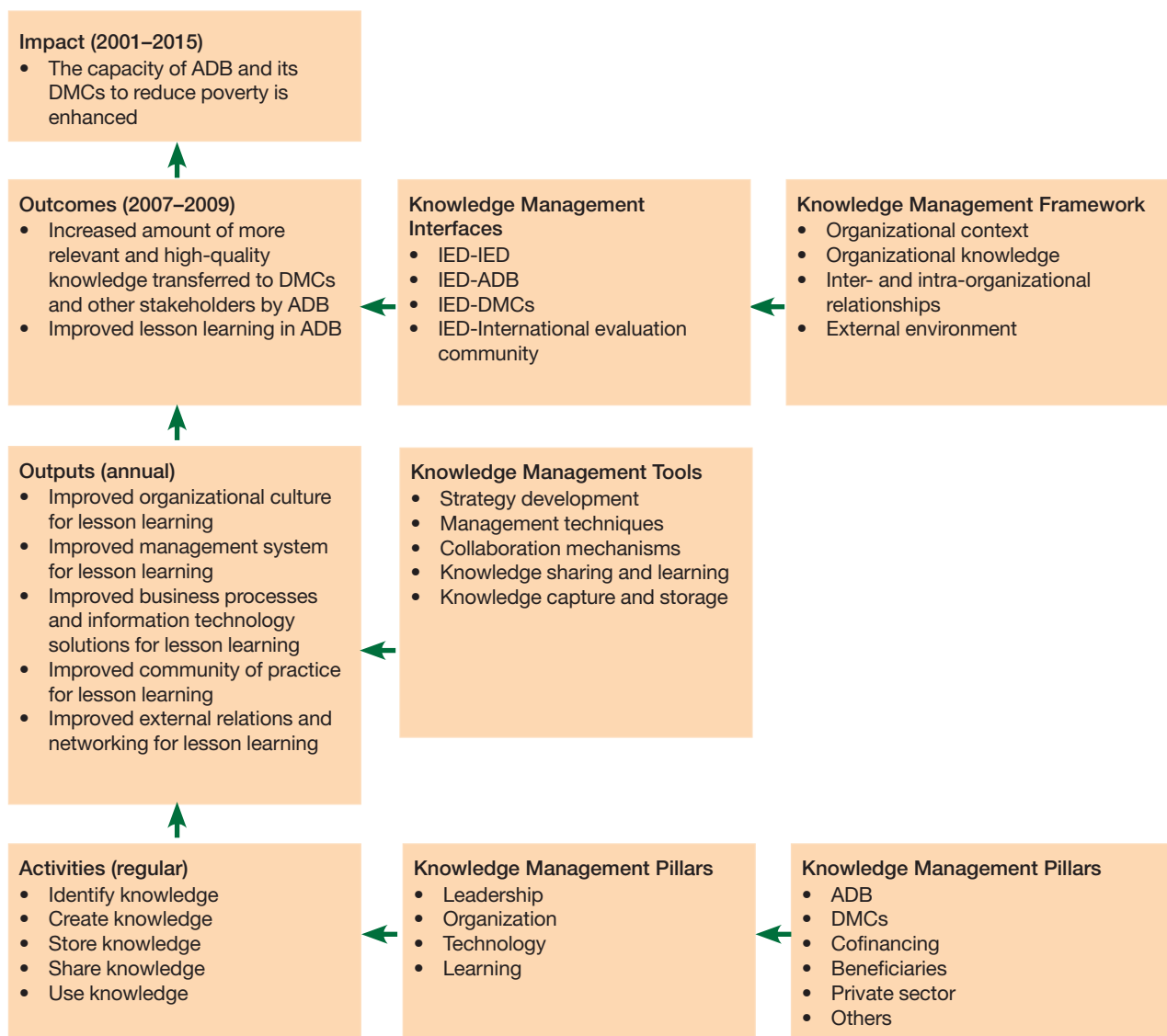
Source: ADB. 2007. *Learning Lessons in ADB*. Manila. Available: [www.adb.org/documents/reports/learning-lessons-adb/strategic-framework-2007-2009.asp](http://www.adb.org/documents/reports/learning-lessons-adb/strategic-framework-2007-2009.asp)

organization and are couched against a framework for addressing these. Needs and issues, as well as the business processes associated with them, are typically determined by (i) the external environment; (ii) the mandate, vision, goal, and objectives of the organization; (iii) the overall strategic direction; (iv) the size and spread of the organization; (v) organizational history and culture; (vi) staff skills and experience; and (vii) available resources.

The elemental steps of business planning are (i) identify key staff groups within the organization; (ii) conduct comprehensive and holistic analyses with the key staff groups to identify needs and issues and barriers to organizational performance; (iii) supplement the analyses with inputs from managers and organizational strategy documents to determine an overall strategic focus; (iv) develop findings and recommendations

to address the needs and issues and to tackle the barriers identified; and (v) implement a series of knowledge management pilots based on the findings and recommendations, leveraged by suitable knowledge management tools, and with concern for measuring the effectiveness of outreach. Figure 5 illustrates the process commonly followed to develop a business plan for knowledge management.

Learning is a process, not an attainment. Hence, in ADB, IED's knowledge management business plans are aligned against ADB's to set in train the drive for continuous improvement that is at the heart of strategic frameworks. Moreover, the annual business planning process specifies that regular annual knowledge audits linked to annual business plans will deliver outputs steadily against each interface based on operational needs and priorities but also resources, with flexibility and adaptability.

**Figure 4: Operating Framework for Lesson Learning**

ADB = Asian Development Bank, DMCs = developing member countries, IED = Independent Evaluation Department.

Source: ADB. 2007. *Learning Lessons in ADB*. Manila. Available: [www.adb.org/documents/reports/learning-lessons-adb/strategic-framework-2007-2009.asp](http://www.adb.org/documents/reports/learning-lessons-adb/strategic-framework-2007-2009.asp)

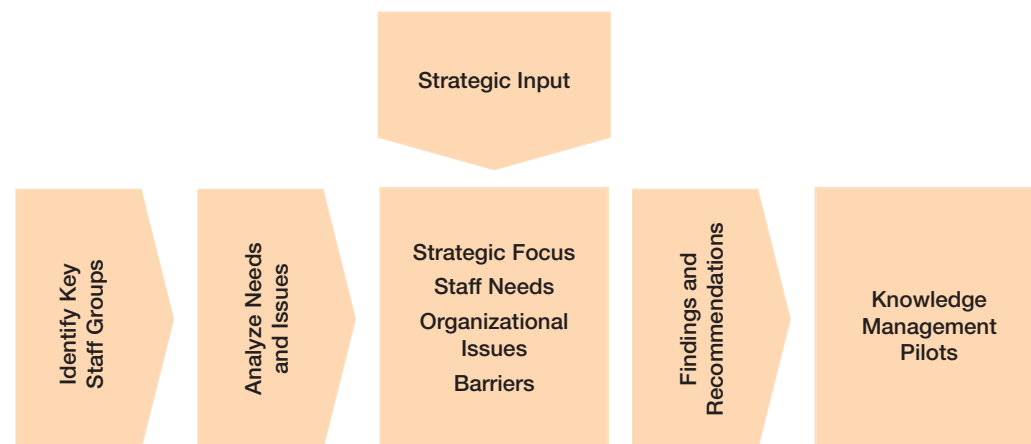
## AUDITING KNOWLEDGE

Knowledge audits help organizations identify their knowledge-based assets and develop strategies to manage them.

- **Definition and Purpose.** Developing a knowledge-sharing culture is a change process on the way to better organizational performance. To achieve that change, an organization needs a vision of where it wants to be and an accurate picture of where it is now—that is, its current reality. A knowledge audit is one way of taking that picture.

What is a knowledge audit? The traditional concept of an audit is an evaluation of a person, business, system, process, project, or product by an independent third party. Financial audits are well understood. They examine the financial statements of a company to check performance against standards. A knowledge audit works differently, and some demystification is called for. It is by and large—granted differing objects, breadth of coverage, and levels of sophistication—a qualitative review (or inventory,

**Figure 5: Developing a Knowledge Management Business Plan**



Source: ADB. 2007. *Learning Lessons in ADB*. Manila. Available: [www.adb.org/documents/reports/learning-lessons-adb/strategic-framework-2007-2009.asp](http://www.adb.org/documents/reports/learning-lessons-adb/strategic-framework-2007-2009.asp)

survey, check) of an organization's knowledge health at both the macro and micro levels. The defining feature of a knowledge audit is that it places people at the center of concerns: it purports to find out what people know, and what they do with the knowledge they have. It can be described as an investigation of the knowledge needs of an organization and the interconnectivity among leadership, organization, technology, and learning in meeting these. Put in a different way, a knowledge audit is an investigation of the strengths and weaknesses of an organization's knowledge, and of the opportunities and threats that face it. A knowledge audit can have multiple purposes, but the most common is to provide tangible evidence of what knowledge an organization needs, where that knowledge is, how it is being used, what problems and difficulties exist, and what improvements can be made. Although there can be no blueprint, a typical knowledge audit will—not necessarily at the same time or level of detail<sup>5</sup>—query the following:

- What are an organization's knowledge needs?
- What tacit and explicit knowledge assets does it have and where are they?
- How does knowledge flow within the organization, formally and informally, and to and from clients and relevant organizations?
- How is that knowledge identified, created, stored, shared, and used?
- What obstacles are there to knowledge flows, e.g., to what extent do its people, business processes, and technology currently support or hamper the effective movement of knowledge?
- What gaps and duplications exist in the organization's knowledge?
- **Constituents of Knowledge Audits.** The typical constituents of knowledge audits, each of which can be conducted at different levels of complexity using a variety of tools,<sup>6</sup> are shown in Figure 6.<sup>7</sup> They are preferably, but not necessarily in the following order:

**Figure 6: Knowledge Audit Constituents**



Source: ADB. 2008. *Auditing the Lessons Architecture*. Manila. Available: [www.adb.org/documents/studies/auditing-lessons-architecture/in371-07.asp](http://www.adb.org/documents/studies/auditing-lessons-architecture/in371-07.asp)

<sup>5</sup> The audit could span the whole organization, but preferably cover constituent parts of it. For the same reason that opinion polls do not sample the entire population, marginal returns diminish as the scale of related exercises increases. The same consideration applies to the number of questions that might be posed.

<sup>6</sup> The common tools used for knowledge audits are face-to-face and telephone interviews; structured, semi-structured, and unstructured questionnaires; workshops; focus group discussions; and online consultations. Other data and information can be gathered by referring to the documentation of the organization, conducting direct inspections, and examining the information and communications technology infrastructure, including the organization's website.

<sup>7</sup> Naturally, in a large and diverse organization, the dimensions and conduct of a knowledge audit will differ radically from that applicable to a small, less complex one.

(i) knowledge needs analysis, (ii) knowledge inventory analysis, (iii) knowledge flow analysis, and (iv) knowledge mapping. Throughout investigations, elements of knowledge, relationships, context, and external environment should be borne in mind, together with the fact that about 80% of an organization's knowledge is tacit—the greatest challenge lies in the audit of that.

## KNOWLEDGE AUDIT METHODOLOGY

In 2007, IED particularized a knowledge audit methodology, its principal means, and associated time frame, to be applied in four phases spanning about 5 months. The methodology draws on the elements of knowledge, relationships, context, and external environment; interfaces; and architecture deemed most relevant

to the department. The four phases are (i) knowledge audit preparations, (ii) knowledge audit analysis, (iii) knowledge audit review, and (iv) business planning. Box 1 enumerates possible related steps and activities, and Box 2 sketches an indicative time frame for implementation. Since knowledge management is a process for optimizing and leveraging the stores of knowledge in an organization, the accent placed (concurrently or in turn) on each constituent of a knowledge audit will depend on where an organization is and where it wants to be. Boxes 1–2 should be interpreted in view of that. A second important caveat is that the following section on the survey of perceptions conducted by IED in 2007, which emphasized identification of knowledge needs, should not be taken as all that a knowledge audit can be.

### Box 1: Knowledge Audit Methodology—Suggested Steps and Activities

Phase 1	1. Plan Knowledge Audit <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify objectives.</li> <li>Conduct background investigations.</li> <li>Hold preliminary discussions.</li> </ul>		2. Assimilate Core Knowledge Activities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify.</li> <li>Create.</li> <li>Store.</li> <li>Share.</li> <li>Use.</li> </ul>	
	3. Delineate Interface Characteristics <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>IED–IED</li> <li>IED–ADB</li> <li>IED–developing member countries</li> <li>IED–international evaluation community</li> </ul>	4. Identify and Liaise with Key Audiences <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Agree on interface representatives.</li> <li>Make initial contact.</li> </ul>	5. Select and Design Audit Forms <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consider interface characteristics.</li> <li>Formulate audit deliverables.</li> </ul>	
Phase 2	6. Identify Knowledge Needs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Investigate what important knowledge the interfaces need to meet goals and objectives.</li> <li>Determine what important knowledge is available and what is missing.</li> <li>Consider, with attention to people, business processes, and technology, how faster access to important knowledge might be secured.</li> </ul>		7. Draw up Knowledge Inventory <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Track down explicit knowledge products and services, their locations, purposes, relevance, and accessibility.</li> <li>Make out tacit knowledge about who the key audiences are, where they are, what they do, what they know, and what they learn.</li> <li>Identify gaps in tacit and explicit knowledge.</li> </ul>	
	8. Analyze Knowledge Flows <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Examine how knowledge products and services flow in IED, and to and from its interfaces, with attention to people, business processes, and technology.</li> <li>Characterize stock-based and flow-based knowledge, trends and patterns, and efficiency and effectiveness.</li> </ul>		9. Create Knowledge Maps <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Locate knowledge products and services and map out flows, constraints, and sinks.</li> <li>Map knowledge gaps.</li> <li>Analyze social networks.</li> </ul>	
Phase 3	10. Assess Knowledge Audit Findings <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Analyze evidence.</li> <li>Suggest courses and means of action.</li> <li>Devise improvements.</li> </ul>		11. Discuss Knowledge Audit <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Carry out after-action reviews and retrospects.</li> <li>Conduct in-house workshops.</li> </ul>	12. Close Knowledge Audit <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Incorporate suggestions for improvement.</li> <li>Identify matters for follow-up.</li> </ul>
	13. Decide on Knowledge Management Initiatives <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Prioritize knowledge management initiatives.</li> <li>Design knowledge management initiatives.</li> </ul>		14. Formulate Business Plans <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Propose capital, operational, administrative, and recurrent expenditures.</li> <li>Submit annual budget document.</li> </ul>	

ADB = Asian Development Bank, IED = Independent Evaluation Department.

Source: ADB. 2008. *Auditing the Lessons Architecture*. Manila. Available: [www.adb.org/documents/studies/auditing-lessons-architecture/in371-07.asp](http://www.adb.org/documents/studies/auditing-lessons-architecture/in371-07.asp)

### Box 2: Indicative Knowledge Audit Time Frame

Phase	Activity	Month 1	Month 2	Month 3	Month 4	Month 5
1	Knowledge Audit Preparations					
	Plan knowledge audit					
	Assimilate core knowledge activities					
	Delineate interface characteristics					
	Identify and liaise with key audiences					
	Select and design audit forms					
2	Knowledge Audit Analysis					
	Identify knowledge needs					
	Draw up knowledge inventory					
	Analyze knowledge flows					
	Create knowledge maps					
3	Knowledge Audit Review					
	Assess knowledge audit findings					
	Discuss knowledge audit					
	Close knowledge audit					
4	Business Planning					
	Decide on knowledge management initiatives					
	Formulate business plans					

Source: ADB. 2008. *Auditing the Lessons Architecture*. Manila. Available: [www.adb.org/documents/studies/auditing-lessons-architecture/in371-07.asp](http://www.adb.org/documents/studies/auditing-lessons-architecture/in371-07.asp)

To underpin future knowledge audits, IED formulated in 2007 survey questionnaires that drew out perceptions of the performance of independent evaluation across the four interfaces. The questionnaires were designed against the Five Competencies Framework. The framework of organizational

competence for knowledge management comprises (i) strategy development, (ii) management techniques, (iii) collaboration mechanisms, (iv) knowledge sharing and learning, and (v) knowledge capture and storage.<sup>8</sup> The questionnaires were comprehensive, organized, systematic, and inclusive;

### Box 3: Perceptions Survey Questionnaires – Interface and Areas of Competence

Interface	Strategy Development	Management Techniques	Collaboration Mechanisms	Knowledge Sharing and Learning	Knowledge Capture and Storage
IED–IED	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
IED–ADB	✓		✓	✓	✓
IED–DMCs			✓	✓	✓
IED–IEC			✓	✓	✓

ADB = Asian Development Bank, DMC = developing member country, IEC = international evaluation community, IED = Independent Evaluation Department.

Source: ADB. 2008. *Auditing the Lessons Architecture*. Manila. Available: [www.adb.org/documents/studies/auditing-lessons-architecture/in371-07.asp](http://www.adb.org/documents/studies/auditing-lessons-architecture/in371-07.asp)

<sup>8</sup> A competency approach befits organizational learning. It offers safeguards against drain of knowledge, inappropriate use of knowledge, and accumulation of poor knowledge.

they provide the framework within which IED can search for continual opportunities to ameliorate the independent evaluation function and its feedback mechanisms. The responses to the questionnaires also revealed rich seams of “as-is,” baseline information, which will be mined vigorously. Box 3 shows for each interface the area of competence on which the questionnaires centered.

## THE SURVEY OF PERCEPTIONS

The survey that opened IED’s first knowledge audit aimed to gain insight into how people within the four interfaces perceive the department’s knowledge management activities. From the results, IED measured awareness of and identified gaps in the department’s knowledge products and services. The Five Competencies Framework was used to assess the department’s organizational performance. This framework identifies these areas of organizational competence for knowledge management as (i) strategy development, wherein tools are used to help an organization achieve a particular goal in knowledge management through a long-term plan of action; (ii) management techniques, which cover a range of practices from assessing the forces for and against desired organizational changes to assessing managerial approaches to mistakes, in order to do things right; (iii) collaboration mechanisms, which pertain to facilitating effective practices in working with others; (iv) knowledge learning and sharing, which means using techniques to learn from and improve future activities; and (v) knowledge capture and storage, wherein routines are applied to ensure that an organization retains essential knowledge. For each interface, survey questionnaires covered only the areas of competence deemed most relevant.

The survey adopted a variant of the Likert scale<sup>9</sup> to evaluate the perceived level of organizational performance per competence area, wherein respondents specify the extent of their agreement with a statement. Five choices were given per question to gauge perception of IED’s competencies: (i) never, (ii) seldom the case, (iii) sometimes the case, (iv) often the case, and (v) always the case. Two methods were used to determine overall perception of organizational performance in each area of competence. The first was based on the responses of the majority per question. The second established an objective measure by computing the weighted average score to account for the perception of the entire sample.

## SURVEY RESULTS

Box 4 gives a snapshot of the perception of the performance of IED in each area of competence by respondents from each interface.<sup>10</sup> Respondents from IED thought that the department is doing well in the areas of strategy development, collaboration mechanisms, and knowledge capture and storage. But the department is “on the fence” in knowledge sharing and learning, and its competence with management techniques must get better. Respondents from other departments felt that IED does well only in strategy development. They were ambivalent with regard to collaboration mechanisms. They recommended that the department should deploy more efforts in the areas of knowledge sharing and learning, and knowledge capture and storage. Respondents from the international evaluation community felt that the department is doing well in all three areas of competence regarding which their opinions were sought.

### Box 4: Summary of Perceptions by Area of Competence

Interface	Strategy Development	Management Techniques	Collaboration Mechanisms	Knowledge Sharing and Learning	Knowledge Capture and Storage
IED–IED	✓	✗	✓	◆	✓
IED–ADB	✓		◆	✗	✗
IED–IEC			✓	✓	✓

ADB = Asian Development Bank, IEC = international evaluation community, IED = Independent Evaluation Department.

Note: ✓ = more than half of the items in the questionnaire were rated as “often the case” to “always the case” by most of the respondents; ◆ = half of the items in the questionnaire were rated as “often the case” to “always the case” by most of the respondents, while the other half were rated as “sometimes the case” to “never;” ✗ = more than half of the items in the questionnaire were rated as “sometimes the case” to “never” by most respondents.

Source: ADB. 2008. *Auditing the Lessons Architecture*. Manila. Available: [www.adb.org/documents/studies/auditing-lessons-architecture/in371-07.asp](http://www.adb.org/documents/studies/auditing-lessons-architecture/in371-07.asp)

<sup>9</sup> Details of the Likert scale are at [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/likert\\_scale](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/likert_scale). A Likert scale is usually composed of an odd number of points measuring positive or negative responses to a statement.

<sup>10</sup> Sadly, no responses were received from evaluation agencies in developing member countries, with implications for the tools that can be applied to that interface in the future.



## ASSOCIATED INITIATIVES

The survey of perceptions substantiated the basis of the knowledge management initiatives that IED introduced from 2007. It clarified the need for others. Among the new knowledge products and services developed, *Learning Curves*<sup>11</sup> are handy, two-paged quick references designed to feed findings and recommendations from evaluation to a broader range of clients. *Success Rates*<sup>12</sup> present condensed information on successful ADB projects. The Evaluation Information System<sup>13</sup> is an online database of lessons, recommendations, and ADB Management responses. The department hosts the secretariat of the Evaluation Cooperation Group.<sup>14</sup> It has also overhauled ECGnet,<sup>15</sup> the group's communication tool. *Evaluation Alerts* are targeted information bytes delivered to personal mailboxes. Methods and guidelines for using plain English, disseminating findings and recommendations, and conducting exit interviews have been prepared. The evaluation pages<sup>16</sup> were refurbished from top to bottom. They are updated daily and are now one of the most accessed first-level directories in adb.org. IED formulated regional technical assistance for capacity development for monitoring and evaluation, expected also to suggest a strategy for evaluation capacity development.<sup>17</sup>

The department advertises its knowledge products and services on *ADB Today*<sup>18</sup> and adb.org (and through other channels and at several venues) with one-time, near-term, and continuous efforts. The survey of perceptions suggested other opportunities. They included *Evaluation Chats*, a communication tool that would facilitate the establishment of an evaluation community of practice focused on the conduct and dissemination of strategic evaluations, harmonization of performance indicators and evaluation methodologies, and development of capacity in evaluation and evaluative thinking. *Evaluation News*<sup>19</sup> and *Evaluation Presentations*<sup>20</sup> were introduced, too. They offer, respectively, reports on events in monitoring and evaluation and short photographic or PowerPoint displays on evaluation topics. IED's knowledge management initiatives are framed deliberately to increase value-added from operations evaluation, and are managed with knowledge performance metrics. Client feedback is sought regularly by various means.

Box 5 identifies the knowledge management tools that might be leveraged to fill the remaining knowledge management gaps identified, and emphasizes with shading the areas of organizational competence found wanting at the time of the survey. ■

<sup>11</sup> Available: [www.adb.org/evaluation/reports.asp?s=1&type=15](http://www.adb.org/evaluation/reports.asp?s=1&type=15)

<sup>12</sup> Available: [www.adb.org/evaluation/reports.asp?s=1&type=16](http://www.adb.org/evaluation/reports.asp?s=1&type=16)

<sup>13</sup> Available: <http://evis.adb.org/>

<sup>14</sup> The Evaluation Cooperation Group was established by the heads of evaluation in multilateral development banks in 1996. Its membership comprises the African Development Bank, ADB, European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, European Investment Bank, Inter-American Development Bank, International Monetary Fund, and World Bank Group. The United Nations Evaluation Group and the Evaluation Network of the Development Assistance Committee of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development are observer members.

<sup>15</sup> Available: [www.ecgnet.org](http://www.ecgnet.org)

<sup>16</sup> Available: [www.adb.org/evaluation/](http://www.adb.org/evaluation/)

<sup>17</sup> Progressively more, evaluation ownership must move from ADB to its developing member countries.

<sup>18</sup> *ADB Today* is a daily e-information resource for all ADB staff in headquarters, resident missions, and representative offices. It is the main internal communication vehicle to keep ADB staff abreast of events and activities of ADB-wide interest. It is produced and edited each working day by the Department of External Relations with inputs from other departments.

<sup>19</sup> Available: [www.adb.org/evaluation/reports.asp?s=1&type=20](http://www.adb.org/evaluation/reports.asp?s=1&type=20)

<sup>20</sup> Available: [www.adb.org/evaluation/evaluation-presentations.asp](http://www.adb.org/evaluation/evaluation-presentations.asp)

### Box 5: Knowledge Management Tools Prioritized for Leverage

Interface	Strategy Development	Management Techniques	Collaboration Mechanisms	Knowledge Sharing and Learning	Knowledge Capture and Storage
IED-IED	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Knowledge Audit</li> <li>Most Significant Change</li> <li>Outcome Mapping</li> <li>Scenario Testing and Visioning</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Five Competencies Framework</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Communities of Practice</li> <li>Action Learning Sets</li> <li>Social Technologies</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Peer Assists</li> <li>Challenge Sessions</li> <li>After-Action Reviews and Retrospects</li> <li>Intranet Strategies</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Taxonomies for Documents and Folders</li> <li>Exit Interviews</li> <li>Shared Network Drives</li> </ul>
IED-ADB	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Scenario Testing and Visioning</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Communities of Practice</li> <li>Social Technologies</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Peer Assists</li> <li>Challenge Sessions</li> <li>After-Action Reviews and Retrospects</li> <li>Intranet Strategies</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Staff Profile Pages</li> <li>Web Logs</li> </ul>
IED-IEC				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Stories</li> <li>Peer Assists</li> <li>After-Action Reviews and Retrospects</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Staff Profile Pages</li> <li>Web Logs</li> </ul>

ADB = Asian Development Bank, IEC = international evaluation community, IED = Independent Evaluation Department.

Source: ADB. 2008. *Auditing the Lessons Architecture*. Manila. Available: [www.adb.org/documents/studies/auditing-lessons-architecture/in371-07.asp](http://www.adb.org/documents/studies/auditing-lessons-architecture/in371-07.asp)

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#### STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT

A strategy is a long-term plan of action designed to achieve a particular goal.

# Linking Research to Practice

The volume of research greatly exceeds its application in practice. Researchers must pay greater attention to the production of their research findings in a flexible range of formats in recognition of the varied needs of consumers.



Research is about both generation and dissemination of findings. In spite of this, disseminating research findings has often been an afterthought in busy research agendas. When the funding of a research program is considered, insufficient time and money are set aside to link research to practice. And, if efforts have in truth been made to incorporate dissemination into the earliest stages of planning, experience reveals that matching the research design to the characteristics of intended users is not easy. No matter what, research findings will simply not be used if the latter are ignored. And so, willy-nilly, research institutions have come to agree that they must find ways to relate research findings to practical applications in planning, policy making, program administration, and delivery of services. There is evidence that they are becoming better at this: some pay attention to the production of research findings in a wide range of formats in recognition of the variety of users. Notwithstanding, while important initiatives undoubtedly exist, research findings still do not inform practice to the extent that they should. For each research agenda, this calls for a dissemination policy, a dissemination plan, and a dissemination strategy. Dissemination tactics will then come into play.

## ARTICULATING A DISSEMINATION POLICY

A dissemination policy is the expression of a research institution's mission and values to its staff members and to the public. It establishes a common vision and the values and measures that will be engaged to achieve accessibility to information content. A dissemination policy can be an effective and economical instrument that links research to practice: rarely do research institutions explain how efforts at dissemination will be tied to utilization.

## DRAWING A DISSEMINATION PLAN

The most successful dissemination processes are usually designed before the start of a research agenda. Dissemination should produce a response—utilization of the research findings—on the part of users. In drawing a dissemination plan, researchers should consider at least the following major elements:

- **Impact and Outcomes:** What is the desired impact of dissemination?<sup>1</sup> What outcomes does the dissemination plan aim to accomplish? In what ways will users benefit?
- **Users:** Which users are most affected by the research? Which would be most interested in learning of the research findings? What are their scope and characteristics?
- **Information Content:** Does the information content match the users' expressed informational needs? Does the comprehension level required to understand the information content match the characteristics of the users? Is the information content reviewed through a quality control mechanism to ensure accuracy and relevance?
- **Medium:** What is the most effective dissemination method to reach each user group? What resources does each group typically access? What capabilities does each group have?
- **Execution:** When should each aspect of the dissemination plan occur? Who should be responsible for dissemination activities?
- **Obstacles:** What potential obstacles may interfere with access to or utilization of the research findings by each user group? What actions could be developed to overcome these obstacles?
- **Accomplishment:** How will accomplishment be described and measured? If data is to be gathered, who will gather it?

<sup>1</sup> The desired impact of dissemination is, simply, utilization. The basic reason to acquire and then disseminate new research-based information is to ensure that it is appropriately considered for use in making decisions, driving changes, or taking action designed to improve outcomes. The critical element of utilization is that the research finding must be thoroughly digested: the users must assimilate it in their understanding and experience.

**Table: Characteristics of An Effective Dissemination Plan**

1. The plan orientates itself to the needs of the users. It relies on appropriate form, language, and information content levels.
2. The plan incorporates various dissemination methods, such as written, graphical, electronic, and verbal media. The methods include research summary documents; press releases; media coverage; flyers, posters, and brochures; letters of thanks to study participants; newsletters to study participants; events and conferences; and seminars. Each method calls for its own format and means of dissemination and includes both proactive and reactive channels—that is, it includes information content that users have identified as important and information content that users may not know to request but are likely to need. The dissemination methods are more likely to succeed when their packaging and information content has been influenced by appropriate inputs from the users.
3. The plan draws on existing resources, relationships, and networks to the maximum extent possible. It also builds the new resources, relationships, and networks needed by users.
4. The plan includes effective quality control mechanisms to ensure that the information content is accurate, relevant, and representative.
5. The plan establishes linkages to resources that may be required to implement the information content, e.g., technical assistance.

Source: Author.

Dissemination processes based on mechanical, one-way flow of written information have not been successful in encouraging adoption and implementation of research findings.

### DEVELOPING A DISSEMINATION STRATEGY

A dissemination plan outlines basic elements that must be implemented. A dissemination strategy can be understood in terms of how a research institution will address particular issues to ensure that dissemination leads to utilization. The most successful dissemination strategies will be broad-based and formulated so that the unexpected does not cause the dissemination plan to fail. The major issues related to a dissemination strategy include:

- **Users:** Is the readiness of the users to change limited? Are there needs for widely divergent formats and levels of information content? Is the number of trusted information sources limited?
- **Source:** Is the credibility of experience limited? Is the level of perceived competence low? Is the motive suspect?
- **Information Content:** Is confidence in the quality of research and its methodology low? Is the credibility of outcomes

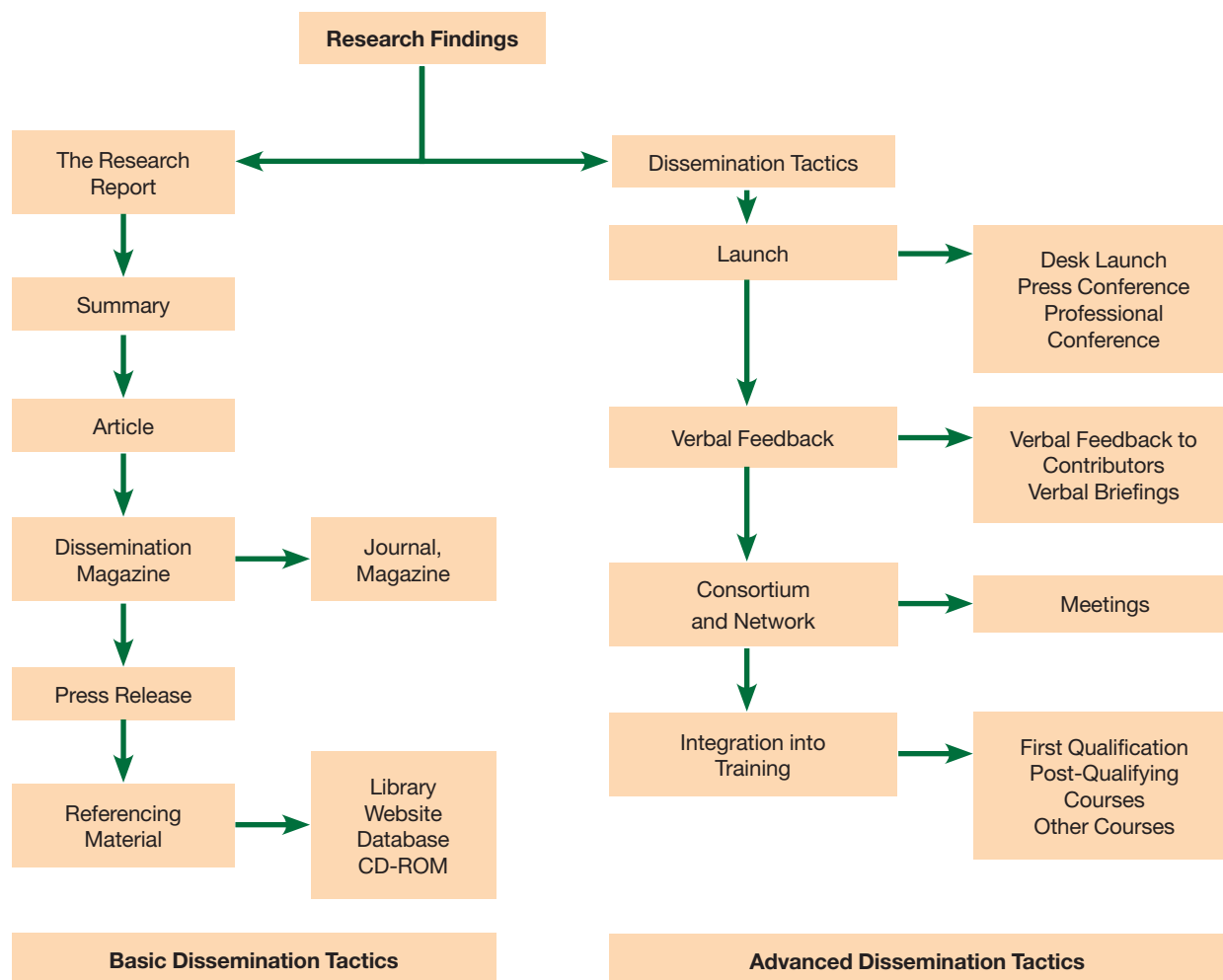
limited? Is the utility and relevance of the information content unclear? Are there cost implications to access to information content? Is the format of the information content non-user friendly?

- **Context:** Are there competing research findings? Does the general economic climate or circumstances favor adoption of research findings? Can the research findings find practical application in the field?
- **Medium:** Is the information content clear and attractive? Is the dissemination method flexible and reliable? Is the dissemination method cost-effective? Are the time frames required to access the information content lengthy?

### APPLYING DISSEMINATION TACTICS

Strategy is the overall effect one wishes to create; tactics are the method by which one wishes to achieve that effect. Dissemination tactics can be basic or advanced depending on the scale and complexity of the dissemination plan. ■

**Figure: Possible Dissemination Tactics**



Source: Adapted from Barnardo's. 2000. *What Works? Making Connections: Linking Research and Practice*.

# Marketing in the Public Sector

Marketing in the public sector may be the final frontier. Agencies operating in the public domain can use a custom blend of the four Ps—product (or service), place, price, and promotion—as well as other marketing techniques to transform their communications with stakeholders, improve their performance, and demonstrate a positive return on the resources they are endowed with.



## TRANSFORMING THE PUBLIC SECTOR

The public sector is the part of economic life, not in private ownership, that deals with the production, delivery, and allocation of basic public goods and services at global,<sup>1</sup> regional, national,<sup>2</sup> or local levels. (Its processes and structures can take the form of direct administration, public corporations, and partial outsourcing. Its activities are funded through government expenditure financed by seigniorage, taxes, and government borrowing, or through grants.)

The public sector is vast. From 1996 to 2006, for example, government spending in the United States made up 35% of gross

domestic product. (Over the same period, in numerous large European economies, its range was 45%–55%.)<sup>3</sup> What happens in the public sector has major implications for economies:<sup>4</sup> since the relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, sustainability, and impact of a country's public sector is vital to national welfare, its organizations and their activities have come under scrutiny.

Many consider public services reform the dominant political narrative of the age. Pioneering ideas of entrepreneurial government,<sup>5</sup> originating from the United States in the mid-1990s, have been influential, and the public sectors of that country and the United Kingdom,<sup>6</sup> to name early adopters,

<sup>1</sup> There is an international public sector. Multilateral cooperation was a feature of the second half of the 20th century, representing a historical reckoning of the nation-state with the growing array of social, political, economic, and environmental issues that affect us all. The composition of this international public sector is varied and evolves; its institutions range from large organizations that are household names, e.g., the United Nations, to smaller regional organizations comprising a few member countries. Areas of broad-based international cooperative activity include (i) political and administrative cooperation; (ii) international justice and law; (iii) international cooperation for development; (iv) regional cooperation; (v) science, technology, and education; and (vi) human rights and humanitarian affairs.

<sup>2</sup> At its most common level, namely, that of the country, the composition of the public sector varies. Yet, public institutions typically deliver such critical services as national defense, police protection, public buildings, fire fighting, urban planning, modes of transport, public transit, corrections, taxation, primary education, and various social programs. They might extend goods and services that non-payers cannot be excluded from such as street lighting; that benefit all of society, not just individuals such as parks and recreation areas; or that encourage equal opportunity such as subsidized rent. Sometimes, provision is moved from the public to the private sector. This is known as privatization, which has, from the early 1980s, taken place on a large scale everywhere in the world. (In other, less common instances, provision may shift from the private to the public sector—health care is but one area where some public institutions now make available, or are experimenting with, goods and services previously furnished by the private sector.) Elsewhere, with differing extents even within countries, areas of overlap exist: this is most often seen in water management, waste management, and security services, among others. To note, the public sector routinely engages the private sector to provide goods and services on its behalf, a practice known as outsourcing.

<sup>3</sup> From the 20th century, growth in gross domestic product per head in Western Europe and North America, and later in some Asian countries, was accompanied by a more-than-proportionate growth in government expenditure. Some consider this the most important single influence on the evolving structure of advanced economies.

<sup>4</sup> Government expenditure affects the structure of employment, the direction of private sector efforts to conform to government policies and supply government needs, and the composition of personal incomes (which increasingly depend on government expenditure).

<sup>5</sup> See David Osborne and Ted Gaebler. 1992. *Reinventing Government: How the Entrepreneurial Spirit is Transforming the Public Sector*. Addison-Wesley. The authors contended that government bureaucracy in the United States, appropriate to the industrial era and times of economic and military crises during which it was created, is not the best system of governance for the post-industrial information age. From the 1960s, the American public has increasingly desired quality and choice of goods and services and efficiency of production. Arguing that quality and choice are not what bureaucratic systems are designed to provide and that efficiency is not possible in a system of complex rules and drawn-out decision making, David Osborne and Ted Gaebler introduced 10 principles of reinvention to guide the transformation of industrial-era public systems. The principles are (i) catalytic government (steering rather than rowing); (ii) community-owned government (empowering rather than serving); (iii) competitive government (injecting competition into service delivery); (iv) mission-driven government (transforming rule-driven organization); (v) result-oriented government (funding outcomes, not inputs); (vi) customer-driven government (meeting the needs of the customer, not the bureaucracy); (vii) enterprising government (earning rather than spending); (viii) anticipatory government (prevention rather than cure); (ix) decentralized government (from hierarchy to participation and teamwork); and (x) market-oriented government (leveraging change through the market).

<sup>6</sup> From 1988, the United Kingdom had made an early start with the Next Steps initiative to transforming the functions, organization, and traditions of the executive and its relations with Parliament. The reforms sought to separate service delivery functions from policy functions, and have the public sector provide services through markets or market-like arrangements, managed by people with the resources and authority to provide those services. The difficulties met by the Next Steps agencies were lack of clarity in the relationship between these agencies and their parent departments, uncertainty concerning who is accountable for performance, and complexity in developing and setting performance goals.

have each experienced continuing reforms to their structures, objectives, and approaches. (Canada, New Zealand, and others soon followed.)

Founded on a client-centric philosophy, reforms in government structures, civil service, and public finances have aimed to help public services become more flexible and cater better to individual needs. In particular, this shift toward a delivery-based philosophy has encouraged (i) changes that move the civil service from being a body giving policy advice to one that assures the availability of quality public goods and services; (ii) the discovery of new avenues to finance public sector activities and their servicing; and (iii) greater reliance on the private and not-for-profit sectors, away from a monopoly state provision model to that of a public service economy.<sup>7</sup>

Increasingly, the lines between private sector and public sector models, depicted one-dimensionally in Table 1, are blurring; managers should not regard the private–public context as a dichotomy but rather as a continuum from “pure private” to “pure public.” At one end of the continuum, one might find transactional marketing, rooted in classical economics, and dealing with one transaction at a time. At the other would be relationship marketing, focused on building

**“There is more similarity in the marketing challenge of selling a precious painting by Degas and a frosted mug of root beer than you ever thought possible.”**

— A. Alfred Taubman

relationships. At the core of such relationship building would be trust.

## MARKETING AND THE PUBLIC SECTOR

Barring admittedly wide differences of opinion among socialist, liberal, and libertarian political philosophies<sup>8</sup> regarding the public sector’s role (and scope), which vary further depending on specific economic circumstances such as recessions, it is generally accepted that the public sector is to make ensuring content and process decisions aimed at collective social improvement from which all human lives should gain. (Key among these are stabilizing functions justified in terms of the failure of markets or the presence of externalities, which require the provision of a regulatory framework that underpins law and order, provides the preconditions for the operations of the market, and promotes equity.)<sup>9</sup>

**Table 1: Private and Public Sector Models**

Private Sector Model	Public Sector Model
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Individual choice in the market</li> <li>• Demand and price</li> <li>• Closure for private action</li> <li>• The equity of the market</li> <li>• The search for market satisfaction</li> <li>• Customer sovereignty</li> <li>• Competition as the instrument of the market</li> <li>• Exit as the stimulus</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collective choice in the polity</li> <li>• Need for resources</li> <li>• Openness for public action</li> <li>• The equity of need</li> <li>• The search for justice</li> <li>• Citizenship</li> <li>• Collective action as the instrument of the polity</li> <li>• Voice as the condition</li> </ul>

Source: John Stewart and Stewart Ranson. 1988. Management in the Public Domain. *Public Money and Management*. 8 (1–2). pp. 13–19.

<sup>7</sup> On a par with the reforms, personnel in the public sector are being transformed from administrators and custodians of resources into accountable managers with greater delegated authority. The notion of delegated authority is important: it provides managers greater opportunities to match the provision of goods and services to the needs of clients, audiences, and partners in their area.

<sup>8</sup> In summary, socialists favor a large public sector consisting of state projects and enterprises (while social democrats tend to favor a medium-sized public sector limited to the provision of universal programs and public services); liberals favor a small public sector; and libertarians favor no public sector, with government tasked primarily with safeguarding property rights, drafting and enforcing laws, and resolving disputes.

<sup>9</sup> In economics, a market failure exists when the production or use of goods and services by the market is not efficient. The externality (or spillover) of an economic transaction is an impact on a party that is not directly involved in the transaction.



Marketing is the activity, set of institutions, and processes—always interconnected and interdependent—meant to identify, anticipate, create, communicate, deliver, and exchange valuable offerings that satisfy clients, audiences, partners, and society at large. In an era when public sector organizations must perform better to respond better to the public interest, irrespective of whether they govern the character of public provision as opposed to producing goods and services themselves,<sup>10</sup> marketing can help.

However, arrangements for governance or provision cannot be the same for different types of goods and services.<sup>11</sup> Hence, marketing in the public sector must be astutely informed by what its organizations do and the way in which they operate, that necessarily being the outcome of political decisions on the purpose and content of the public realm (which are almost always about balancing conflict over values).<sup>12</sup> Therefore, marketing in the public sector can only become relevant when fundamental political decisions have been made on commitment to and responsibility for collective agency.

## MARKETING IN THE PUBLIC SECTOR

Once marketing as a language of discourse in the public sector has been agreed to and its distinctive purposes, conditions, and tasks are appreciated (since the public domain has different values), then marketing as an integrated set of ideas can be used.<sup>13</sup> (This need not mean that the civil service's traditional strengths of equity, accountability, impartiality, and a wide review of the public interest will thereby be forsaken.) Of course, the public sector has long had elements of marketing<sup>14</sup> but they

have usually been marginal to the provision of core public goods and services. Detractors have argued that marketing approaches entailed little other than the use of specific tools, not the development and adoption of a marketing orientation.

Still, over the last 20 years, considerable latent potential has opened on a par with the growth of consumerism,<sup>15</sup> the adoption of strategic marketing,<sup>16</sup> and the use of promotional techniques. Marketing must surely now be seen to be an essential part of public sector management. Private sector tools, methods, and approaches have already been adopted in the public sector. (Monitoring and evaluation figures prominently.) But many public sector organizations—especially not-for-profit—are realizing that strategic marketing can help address two challenges: the challenge of meeting mandates and satisfying stakeholder needs in the face of diminishing resources, and the challenge of meeting specified revenue or cost-recovery targets. With the shift of the public sector to more managerial, business-like approaches, the adoption of marketing and related managerial practices can also strengthen accountability in operations.

One of the greatest obstacles to using marketing in the public sector is lack of understanding of the different types of marketing in which it might engage and how each might help build relational capital.<sup>17</sup> According to Judith Madill,<sup>18</sup> four major forms exist:

- **Marketing of Products and Services.** Many public sector organizations offer products and services free of charge or for a fee (either on a cost-recovery or for-profit basis to support core public good programs). Marketing in this context is not so dissimilar to that conducted in the private sector.<sup>19</sup> However, many public sector organizations are much more familiar with promotion than with the other Ps of the marketing mix—such as product (or service), place, and price—because many have developed communications plans outside of a marketing framework. The negative image of marketing in the public domain may well owe to

**“Next to doing the right thing, the most important thing is to let people know you are doing the right thing.”**

—John D. Rockefeller

<sup>10</sup> The uptake of notions of entrepreneurial government suggests that we may perhaps be moving toward public sector organizations that have extensive powers and responsibilities but, except in times of crisis, produce few public goods and services themselves.

<sup>11</sup> Naturally, marketing a service also differs from marketing a product. What is significant about services, as opposed to products, is the relative dominance of intangible attributes in their makeup.

<sup>12</sup> Politics is the activity through which people make, preserve, and amend the general rules under which they live. It is inextricably linked to the existence of diversity and conflict and willingness (or lack thereof) to cooperate and act collectively.

<sup>13</sup> All the same, differences should not be exaggerated and used as an excuse for inefficiency, ineffectiveness, and waste.

<sup>14</sup> Examples include the promotion of local areas for tourism or economic development.

<sup>15</sup> Consumerism has both fuelled and been sped by decentralization, rising customer consciousness, improved communications, greater choice, and systems of redress.

<sup>16</sup> If the public sector must now abide more closely by the key market principles of transaction, price, and competition—which rest inter alia on encouraging end-user choice, internal markets, quality-based management systems, market testing, competitive tendering, and contracting out—it is de facto being placed in a similar position as the private sector, against which it may have to compete. Public sector organizations must therefore also become conversant with such notions as market segmentation, market positioning, and the marketing mix. (Even where there is no competition from the private sector, public sector organizations are often part of an internal market and are compelled in any event to compete against one another.)

<sup>17</sup> Notions of relational capital and relationship marketing can do much to offset resistance to the use of marketing in the public sector. First, they offer a conceptually valid framework with which to locate and articulate in public sector organizations a marketing function that emphasizes its strategic rather than operational significance. Second, they give practical insights into how marketing might help meet the challenges of the plural state, including suggestions as to intra- and inter-organizational management and governance aspects of it.

<sup>18</sup> Judith Madill. 1998. Marketing in Government. *Optimum, The Journal of Public Sector Management*. 28 (4). pp. 9–18.

<sup>19</sup> Advertising is a case in point: the same advertising techniques used to promote commercial goods and services can be used to inform, educate, and motivate the public about noncommercial issues, such as HIV/AIDS, political ideology, energy conservation, and deforestation. In its noncommercial guise, advertising in the public interest can be a powerful educational tool capable of reaching and motivating large audiences.

**Table 2: State-of-Marketing Methodology**

Factor	Descriptor
Culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Senior executives are familiar with and committed to marketing.</li> <li>There is shared understanding of marketing and priority client audiences.</li> <li>Managers and staff are focused on delivering superior value to clients.</li> <li>Developing new, valued approaches to serving clients is encouraged.</li> <li>Work groups collaborate to serve clients.</li> </ul>
Organization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There is a senior management position with overall responsibility for marketing.</li> <li>The senior marketing manager works closely with the head of the organization.</li> <li>There is a marketing function within the organization that extends beyond communications.</li> <li>Staff in the marketing function work closely with managers in operational or program groups.</li> </ul>
Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There is a formal marketing planning process at the organizational level.</li> <li>The marketing plan is aligned with the organization's mission and vision.</li> <li>The organization has a clearly defined brand strategy and vision.</li> <li>Measurable marketing objectives are established.</li> <li>Marketing budgets are established based on identified strategies and tactics.</li> <li>Marketing plans are revisited based on changes in the environment.</li> </ul>
Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There is a clearly defined process for identifying and developing new products, programs, or services.</li> <li>The product, program, and service development process is proactive rather than reactive.</li> <li>High-value ideas are acted on in a timely manner.</li> <li>The organization actively communicates the value of products, programs, and services to target audiences.</li> <li>There is a close working relationship with partners involved in delivery of products, programs, and services to end-client audiences.</li> <li>Fees are based on an understanding of usage and uptake, rather than just cost-recovery.</li> <li>The client experience is coordinated to ensure consistency across service delivery channels.</li> </ul>
Knowledge and Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Staff in the marketing group tend to have training and experience in marketing management.</li> <li>Marketing managers and staff are encouraged to upgrade their skills.</li> <li>People in product, program, and service management positions have received training in marketing management.</li> <li>Staff members are encouraged to acquire resources they need to conduct marketing activities.</li> <li>The organization readily adopts new marketing techniques and technologies.</li> <li>The organization has no difficulty attracting qualified marketing staff.</li> </ul>
Marketing Information and Measurement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Marketing research is used to assess the extent to which the organization delivers superior value to clients.</li> <li>Research is used to evaluate elements of the marketing mix.</li> <li>Insights from multiple sources are integrated to create a full view of client audiences.</li> <li>Information systems make it easy to access, analyze, and share client market insights.</li> <li>A process is in place to measure marketing performance against stated objectives.</li> <li>Measurement results are actively used to identify areas for improvement.</li> <li>Managers and staff are rewarded for achieving marketing objectives and improving the value delivered to clients.</li> </ul>
Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Marketing budgets are sufficient from year to year to implement identified strategies and tactics.</li> <li>The number of staff working in marketing is sufficient given the size and needs of the organization.</li> </ul>
Outputs and Results	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>New clients have been attracted to use the organization's products, programs, and services.</li> <li>Client satisfaction is maintained at a high level.</li> <li>Revenues from fee-based products, programs, and services have grown.</li> <li>The organization has grown in prominence among funding stakeholders.</li> <li>There has been a measurable impact on attitudes and behaviors of audiences targeted.</li> <li>Products, programs, and services are unique and more highly valued than alternatives.</li> </ul>

Source: Adapted from James Mintz, Doug Church, and Bernie Colterman. 2006. The Case for Marketing in the Public Sector. *Optimum, The Journal of Public Sector Management*. 36 (4). pp. 1–18.

the fact that many managers there equate marketing with advertising.<sup>20</sup> The understanding that all four elements of the marketing mix are aspects of a complete marketing strategy can be developed through marketing training.

- **Social Marketing.** According to Philip Kotler and Gerald Zaltman, social marketing is the design, implementation, and control of programs calculated to influence the acceptability of social ideas and involving considerations

<sup>20</sup> Philip Kotler and Nancy Lee agree: "Marketing is much more than advertising; it is about knowing your customers, partners, and competitors; segmenting targeting and positioning; communicating persuasively; innovation and launching new services and programs; developing effective delivery channels; forming partnerships and strategic alliances; performance management and pricing/cost recovery. Marketing turns out to be the best planning platform for a public agency that wants to meet citizens' needs and deliver real value. In the private sector, marketing's mantra is customer value and satisfaction. In the public sector, it is citizen value and satisfaction." See Philip Kotler and Nancy Lee. 2007. *Marketing in the Public Sector: A Roadmap for Improved Performance*. Pearson Education, Inc.

of product, planning, pricing, communication, distribution, and marketing research. It may involve campaigns to change attitudes and the behavior of target audiences.

- **Policy Marketing.** This type of marketing entails campaigns to convince specific sectors of society to accept policies or new legislation.
- **Demarketing.** “Don’t Use Our Programs” marketing calls for campaigns that are launched by public sector organizations to advise or persuade targeted groups not to use programs that have been available to them in the past.

Well-designed marketing that takes into account the characteristics of the public sector can greatly assist public sector organizations in serving their stakeholders. Failure to take account of the differences in purposes, conditions, and tasks that distinguish them from the private sector will likely lead to inappropriate and ill-conceived marketing programs. That noted, the institutionalization of marketing (and associated behaviors) should proceed. Table 2 lists eight underlying factors or constructs and 43 associated descriptors that can be used to gauge the state of marketing in public sector organizations.

## A ROAD MAP FOR IMPROVED MARKETING PERFORMANCE

Usefully, in the book cited earlier, Philip Kotler and Nancy Lee identified eight ways to apply marketing tools to the public domain. Each tackles an accepted private marketing tenet and

shows how to apply it as part of an agency’s marketing effort.<sup>21</sup> The tenets are

- developing and enhancing popular products, programs, and services;
- setting motivating prices, incentives, and disincentives;
- optimizing distribution channels;
- creating and maintaining a desired brand identity;
- communicating effectively with key publics;
- improving client service and satisfaction;
- influencing positive public behaviors through social marketing; and
- forming strategic partnerships. ■

## FURTHER READING

- Philip Kotler and Gerald Zaltman. 1971. Social Marketing: An Approach to Planned Social Change. *Journal of Marketing*. 35. pp. 3–12.
- Philip Kotler and Nancy Lee. 2007. *Marketing in the Public Sector: A Roadmap for Improved Performance*. Pearson Education, Inc.
- David Osborne and Ted Gaebler. 1992. *Reinventing Government: How the Entrepreneurial Spirit is Transforming the Public Sector*. Addison-Wesley.
- Kieron Walsh. 1994. Marketing and Public Sector Management. *European Journal of Marketing*. 28 (3). pp. 63–71.

<sup>21</sup> The book ends with vital information on how to manage the marketing process by gathering data, input, and feedback; monitoring and evaluating performance; and developing a compelling marketing plan.



### STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT

A strategy is a long-term plan of action designed to achieve a particular goal.

# The Most Significant Change Technique

The Most Significant Change technique helps monitor and evaluate the performance of projects and programs. It involves the collection and systematic participatory interpretation of stories of significant change emanating from the field level—stories about who did what, when, and why, and the reasons why the event was important. It does not employ quantitative indicators.



## RATIONALE

Development (as so much of knowledge and learning) is about change—change that takes place in a variety of domains.<sup>1</sup> To move towards what is desirable and away from what is not, stakeholders must clarify what they are really trying to achieve, develop a better understanding of what is (and what is not) being achieved, and explore and share their various values and preferences about what they hold to be significant change. Evaluation has a role to play. However, on the word of Albert Einstein, “Not everything that can be counted counts, and not everything that counts can be counted.”

## DEFINITION

The Most Significant Change technique is a qualitative and participatory form of monitoring and evaluation<sup>2</sup> based on the collection and systematic selection of stories<sup>3</sup> of reported changes from development activities. The technique was developed by Rick Davies in the mid-1990s to meet the challenges associated with monitoring and evaluating a complex participatory rural development program in Bangladesh, which had diversity in both implementation and outcomes. The technique is becoming popular, and adaptations have already been made.

## BENEFITS

The Most Significant Change technique facilitates project and program improvement by focusing the direction of work away from less-valued directions toward more fully shared visions and explicitly valued directions, e.g., what do we really want to achieve and how will we produce more of it?<sup>4</sup> It can also help uncover important, valued outcomes not initially specified. It delivers these benefits by creating space for stakeholders to reflect, and by facilitating dynamic dialogue. As a corollary, project and program committees often become better at conceptualizing impact (and hence become better at planning). The unusual methodology of the Most Significant Change technique and its outcomes are a foil for other monitoring and evaluation techniques, such as logic models (results frameworks), appreciative inquiry, and outcome mapping—especially where projects and programs have diverse, complex outcomes with multiple stakeholders groups and financing agencies—to enrich summative evaluation with unexpected outcomes and very best success stories. What is more, the technique’s reliance on participatory monitoring and evaluation can only enhance the chances that lessons will be learned and that recommendations will be acted upon.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> For instance, the domains might relate to changes in the quality of people’s lives, the nature of their participation in development activities, or the sustainability of organizations.

<sup>2</sup> Qualitative monitoring and evaluation is about learning: it is dynamic and inductive and therefore focuses on questioning. The data is hard to aggregate. Goal displacement is not an issue. Quantitative monitoring and evaluation is about proving (accountability): it is static and deductive and therefore focuses on measurement. The data is easy to aggregate. Goal displacement can be a problem. The Most Significant Change technique is a form of monitoring because it occurs throughout the project cycle and provides information to help people manage that. Michael Quinn Patton has argued that evaluation findings serve three primary purposes: to render judgments, to facilitate improvements, and/or to generate knowledge—the Most Significant Change technique contributes to evaluation because it provides data on outcomes that can be used to help assess the performance of a project or program as a whole.

<sup>3</sup> Ideally, the stories will be 1–2 pages long in proforma.

<sup>4</sup> The Most Significant Change technique differs from common monitoring and evaluation techniques in at least four respects: the focus is on the unexpected (rather than predetermined quantitative indicators that do not tell stakeholders what they do not know they need to know); information about change is documented in text, not numbers; major attention is given to explicit value judgments; and information is analyzed through a structured social process.

<sup>5</sup> Some have suggested that the technique could be improved by adding a process to formally incorporate the lessons learned from the stories into short-term and long-term project or program planning. This might be accomplished by requesting those who report stories to make recommendations for action drawing from the stories they selected.

## PROCESS

The central process of the Most Significant Change technique is the collection and systematic selection of reported changes by means of purposive sampling with a bias in favor of success. This involves asking field staff to elicit anecdotes from stakeholders, focusing on what most significant change has occurred as the result of an initiative, and why they think that change occurred. These dozens, if not hundreds, of stories are passed up the chain and winnowed down to the most significant as determined by each management layer until only one story is selected—a story that describes a real experience, reviewed, defended, and selected by the people charged with the success of the project or program. Participants enjoy the process and usually bring to it a high level of enthusiasm—this owes mainly to the use of storytelling.<sup>6</sup>

## ENABLERS

Four broad enabling contextual factors drive successful implementation of the Most Significant Change technique.

These are

- Support from senior management.
- The commitment to the process of a leader.

- The development of trust between field staff and villagers.
- An organizational culture that prioritizes reflection and learning.
- Infrastructure that enables regular feedback of the results to stakeholders.
- Time to run several cycles of the technique.

## CAUTION

The Most Significant Change technique is still evolving. Suggestions for improvements have been made,<sup>7</sup> while others look to adapt it to different contexts or to combine it creatively with other approaches. Further, although it can address what follows, the Most Significant Change technique should not be used to

- Capture expected change.
- Prepare stories for public relations.
- Understand the average experience of stakeholders.
- Generate an evaluation report for accountability purposes.
- Conduct a quick evaluation.
- Conduct retrospective evaluation of a completed project or program. ■

### Box: Overview of Implementation Steps

What?	Why?
1. Getting started: establishing champions and getting familiar with the approach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The plan orientates itself to the needs of the users. It relies on appropriate form, language, and information content levels.</li> </ul>
2. Establishing “domains of change”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The plan incorporates various dissemination methods, such as written, graphical, electronic, and verbal media. The methods include research summary documents; press releases; media coverage; flyers, posters, and brochures; letters of thanks to study participants; newsletters to study participants; events and conferences; and seminars. Each method calls for its own format and means of dissemination and includes both proactive and reactive channels—that is, it includes information content that users have identified as important and information content that users may not know to request but are likely to need. The dissemination methods are more likely to succeed when their packaging and information content has been influenced by appropriate inputs from the users.</li> </ul>
3. Defining the reporting period	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The plan draws on existing resources, relationships, and networks to the maximum extent possible. It also builds the new resources, relationships, and networks needed by users.</li> </ul>
4. Collecting stories of change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The plan includes effective quality control mechanisms to ensure that the information content is accurate, relevant, and representative.</li> </ul>
5. Reviewing the stories within the organizational hierarchy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To make explicit what individuals and wider groups value as significant change</li> <li>• To broaden understanding of what is seen as significant change in a project or program as a whole</li> <li>• To abstract and synthesize common elements of significant change</li> <li>• To provide a source of evaluation information to stakeholders</li> </ul>

*continued on next page*

<sup>6</sup> The advantage of stories is that people tell them naturally (indigenously). Stories can also deal with complexity and context and can carry hard messages (undiscussables) that people remember. However, they are not known for accuracy (truth).

<sup>7</sup> Some have suggested that the technique could be revised to elicit and include the voices of critics and nonparticipants, conduct en masse participatory analysis of stories, improve the feedback process, and establish a formal process for incorporating the insights gained into both short- and long-term project and program planning.

Box continued

What?	Why?
6. Providing stakeholders with regular feedback about the review process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To inform each subsequent round of story collection and selection</li> <li>To effectively record and adjust the direction of attention and the criteria used to value events</li> <li>To deepen organizational learning about the changes engendered by the project or program</li> </ul>
7. Setting in place a process to verify the stories, if necessary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To check that stories have been reported accurately and honestly</li> <li>To provide an opportunity to gather more detailed information about events seen as especially significant</li> </ul>
8. Quantification	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To include quantitative information as well as qualitative information</li> <li>To quantify the extent to which the most significant changes identified in one location have taken place in other locations within a specific period</li> <li>To monitor the monitoring system itself</li> </ul>
9. Conducting secondary analysis of the stories en masse	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To identify main themes and differences among stories</li> <li>To theorize about change</li> <li>To encourage further publication via articles, conference papers, etc.</li> </ul>
10. Revising the Most Significant Change process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To revise the design of the Most Significant Change process to take into account what has been learned as a direct result of using it and the findings, conclusions, and recommendations from that</li> </ul>

Source: Rick Davies and Jess Dart. 2005. *The 'Most Significant Change' (MSC) Technique: A Guide to Its Use*. Manila. Available: [www.mande.co.uk/docs/MSCGuide.pdf](http://www.mande.co.uk/docs/MSCGuide.pdf)

## FURTHER READING

Rick Davies and Jess Dart. 2005. *The 'Most Significant Change' (MSC) Technique: A Guide to Its Use*. Manila. Available: [www.mande.co.uk/docs/MSCGuide.pdf](http://www.mande.co.uk/docs/MSCGuide.pdf)



## STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT

A strategy is a long-term plan of action designed to achieve a particular goal.



# Outcome Mapping

Development is about people—it is about how they relate to one another and their environment, and how they learn in doing so. Outcome mapping puts people and learning first and accepts unexpected change as a source of innovation. It shifts the focus from changes in state, viz., reduced poverty, to changes in behaviors, relationships, actions, and activities.



## RATIONALE

Development agencies must show that their activities make significant and lasting contributions to the welfare of intended beneficiaries. But they may well be trying to measure results that are beyond their reach: the impacts they cite as evidence are often the result of a confluence of events for which they cannot realistically get full credit. The questions that they cannot easily answer are

- How can assessment of impact move beyond attribution to documenting contributions to social change?
- How do you methodically and reasonably capture the richness of what is occurring in projects or programs?
- How do you effectively involve stakeholders in monitoring and evaluation of projects or programs?
- How do you effectively integrate monitoring and evaluation into projects or programs from the planning stage?
- How do you decide what to monitor and evaluate?
- How do you notice, explain, and respond to unexpected results?

Outcome mapping exposes myths about measuring impacts and helps to answer such questions. A project or program that uses the framework and vocabulary of outcome mapping does not claim the achievement of development impacts, nor does it belittle the importance of changes in state. Rather, it focuses on its contributions to outcomes (that may in turn enhance the possibility of development impacts—the relationship is not inevitably a direct one of cause and effect.) More positively, because outcome mapping limits its concerns to those results that fall strictly within a project or program's sphere of

influence, development agencies can become more specific about the actors they target, the changes they expect to see, and the strategies they employ.<sup>1</sup>

## DEFINITION

Outcome mapping is a (still evolving) method for planning, monitoring, and evaluating development activities that aim to bring about social change. It was developed in 2001 by the International Development Research Centre to clarify what human, social, and environmental betterment projects or programs hope to contribute and then focus monitoring and evaluation on factors and actors within their direct sphere of influence. The fundamental premise of outcome mapping is that for each change in state there are correlating changes in behavior that are best encouraged if continuing responsibility has been devolved to local people and local institutions.

## THE STAGES OF OUTCOME MAPPING

The full process of outcome mapping involves three stages of thinking:

- **Intentional Design.** This stage helps the project or program design team clarify and reach consensus on the macro-level changes it would like to support and to plan appropriate strategies. The design team should clearly express the long-term, downstream impacts that it is working towards, bearing in mind that the project or program will not achieve them single-handedly. These desired impacts will provide reference points to guide strategy formulation and action plans, rather than serve as mere performance indicators.

<sup>1</sup> Characteristically, for example, the evaluation of a water purification project focuses on whether water quality has improved. Outcome mapping also examines whether the beneficiaries maintaining the system now have and use the knowledge and skills, tools, and other resources needed to keep it running in the long term, for instance, by monitoring contaminant levels, changing filters, or bringing in experts when needed.



## Box: A Glossary of Outcome Mapping Terms

**Boundary Partners.** Individuals, groups, or organizations with whom the project or program interacts directly and whom it hopes to influence.

**Evaluation Plan.** A short description of the main elements of an evaluation study to be conducted.

**Intentional Design.** The planning stage of outcome mapping at which a project or program gathers consensus on the macro-level changes it wants to influence and the strategies to be used.

**Mission.** An ideal description of how the project or program intends to support the achievement of the vision. The mission states the areas in which the project or program will work but does not list all the activities in which it will engage.

**Monitoring Priorities.** A process by which data and information are systematically and regularly collected on a project or program over time.

**Organizational Practices.** Eight separate practices by which a project or program remains relevant, innovative, sustainable, or connected to its environment. The practices are

- prospecting for new ideas, opportunities, and resources;
- seeking feedback from key informants;
- obtaining the support of your next highest power;
- assessing and (re)designing products, services, systems, and procedures;
- checking up on those already served to add value;
- sharing your best wisdom with the world;
- experimenting to remain innovative; and
- engaging in organizational reflection.

**Outcome Challenges.** The description of the ideal changes a project or program intends to influence in the behavior, relationships, actions, and activities of a boundary partner.

**Outcome Journal.** A data and information collection tool for monitoring the progress of a boundary partner in achieving progress markers over time.

**Performance Journal.** A data and information collection tool for monitoring how well a project or program is carrying out its organizational practices.

**Progress Markers.** A set of graduated indicators of changed behaviors of a boundary partner that focus on the depth or quality of the change.

**Strategy Journal.** A data and information collection tool for monitoring the strategies a project or program uses to encourage change in the boundary partner.

**Strategy Map.** A matrix that categorizes six strategy types (causal, persuasive, and supportive; each aimed at a specific individual or group and at a specific individual or group's environment) that a project or program employs to influence the boundary partner. Strategies are aimed at either the boundary partner or the environment in which the boundary partner operates.

**Vision.** A description of the large-scale economic, political, social, or environmental changes that the project or program hopes to encourage.

Source: Summarized and adapted from Sarah Earl, Fred Carden, and Terry Smutylo. 2001. *Outcome Mapping: Building Learning and Reflection into Development Programs*. Ottawa, Canada: International Development Research Centre. Available: [www.idrc.ca/en/ev-9330-201-1-DO\\_TOPIC.html](http://www.idrc.ca/en/ev-9330-201-1-DO_TOPIC.html)

Progress markers, which will be used to track performance, should be developed for each boundary partner. They will identify the incremental—and often upstream—changes that the project or program sensibly hopes to influence, prompt behavioral change, and build the foundations of sustained social change. After clarifying what changes the project or program hopes to influence, the design team should select activities that maximize the likelihood of success. In short, the intentional design stage articulates answers to four questions: why? how? who? what?

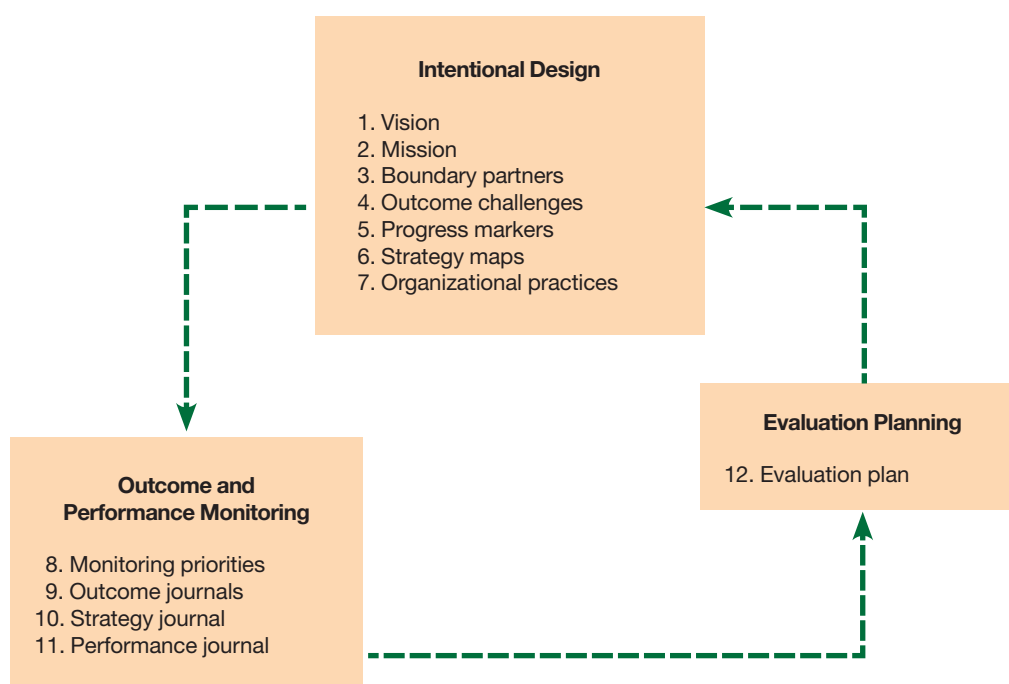
- **Outcome and Performance Monitoring.** This stage provides a framework for monitoring actions and the progress of the boundary partners towards outcomes. The performance monitoring framework builds on the progress markers,

strategy maps, and organizational practices developed at the intentional design stage. There are three data and information collection tools: an outcome journal to monitor boundary partner actions and relationships, a strategy journal to monitor strategies and activities, and a performance journal to monitor the organizational practices that keep the project or program relevant and viable. These tools will provide workspace and processes and help the design team reflect on the data and information that it has collected and how these can be used to improve performance.

- **Evaluation Planning.** This stage helps the design team set priorities to target evaluation resources and activities where they will be most useful. Evaluation planning outlines the main elements of the evaluations to be conducted.

**Figure 1: The Four Basic Questions of the Intentional Design Stage**

Source: Terry Smutylo. 2005. Outcome Mapping: A Method for Tracking Behavioural Changes in Development Programs. *Institutional Learning and Change Brief No. 7*. Available: [www.cgiar-ilac.org/files/publications/briefs/ILAC\\_Brief07\\_mapping.pdf](http://www.cgiar-ilac.org/files/publications/briefs/ILAC_Brief07_mapping.pdf)

**Figure 2: The Three Stages and Twelve Steps of Outcome Mapping**

Source: Terry Smutylo. 2005. Outcome Mapping: A Method for Tracking Behavioural Changes in Development Programs. *Institutional Learning and Change Brief No. 7*. Available: [www.cgiar-ilac.org/files/publications/briefs/ILAC\\_Brief07\\_mapping.pdf](http://www.cgiar-ilac.org/files/publications/briefs/ILAC_Brief07_mapping.pdf)

## BENEFITS

People involved in national and local policy making, staff and consultants of development agencies, and field personnel can use outcome mapping. Used prospectively, it can help

- Understand and influence more effectively human and ecological well-being
- Plan and measure social change in projects or programs
- Foster social and organizational learning
- Identify individuals, groups, and organizations with whom one might work directly to influence behavioral change

- Bring stakeholders into the planning and monitoring and evaluation processes
- Strengthen partnerships and alliances
- Plan and monitor behavioral change and the strategies to support those changes
- Monitor the internal practices of projects or programs so that they remain effective
- Design an evaluation plan to examine particular issues more precisely

## THE IMPORTANCE OF PARTICIPATION

Outcome mapping is based on principles of participation and iterative learning. It is usually initiated through a participatory workshop led by an internal or external facilitator who is familiar with the methodology. It purposefully includes those implementing the project or program in the design and in data and information collection to encourage ownership, use of findings, and adaptation. It is a consciousness-raising, consensus-building, and empowering methodology. The process for identifying the macro-level changes, selecting the monitoring priorities, and designing the evaluation plan is intended to be participatory: wherever feasible, it should involve the full range of stakeholders. Engagement means that stakeholders will derive benefit and be credited for fulfilling

their development roles; projects and programs will be credited for their contributions to this process. ■

## FURTHER READING

Sarah Earl, Fred Carden, and Terry Smutylo. 2001. *Outcome Mapping: Building Learning and Reflection into Development Programs*. Ottawa, Canada: International Development Research Centre. Available: [www.idrc.ca/en/ev-9330-201-1-DO\\_TOPIC.html](http://www.idrc.ca/en/ev-9330-201-1-DO_TOPIC.html)

Outcome Mapping Learning Community. Available: [www.outcomemapping.ca/](http://www.outcomemapping.ca/)

Evaluation @ IDRC: International Development Research Centre. Available: [www.idrc.ca/evaluation/](http://www.idrc.ca/evaluation/)



## STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT

A strategy is a long-term plan of action designed to achieve a particular goal.

# Overcoming Roadblocks to Learning<sup>1</sup>

The gulf between the ideal type of a learning organization and the state of affairs in typical bilateral and multilateral development agencies remains huge. Defining roadblocks, however numerous they may be, is half the battle to removing them—it might make them part of the solution instead of part of the problem.



## BACKGROUND

Organizational learning is collective learning by individuals, and the fundamental phenomena of individual learning apply to organizations. However, organizational learning has distinctive characteristics concerning what is learned, how it is learned, and the adjustments needed to enhance learning. These owe to the fact that an organization is, by general definition, a collective whose individual constituents work to achieve a common goal from discrete operating and supporting units. Practices bring different perspectives and cultures to bear and shape data, information, and knowledge flows.

Political considerations are the most serious impediment to becoming a learning organization. However, by understanding more fully what obstacles to learning can exist in a complex organization in a complex environment, one can circumscribe the problem space and create enabling environments for a more positive future. Such environments would facilitate self-organization, exploration of the space of possibilities, generative feedback, emergence, and co-evolution. They would create an explanatory framework and facilitate action.

## THE BIAS FOR ACTION

The organizational context of nongovernment organizations seems to give more value to action than to reflection. An activist culture can lead to quick fixes that in the long term can exacerbate the problems faced if the second-order causes of the problems are not recognized and tackled. The forces that favor jumping into “solutions mode” include (i) time spent in inconclusive deliberations; (ii) the urgency of task; (iii) the felt need for action; (iv) avoidance of reflective observation, unclear concepts, and uncertainty of outcomes; and (v) fear of failure

**“An organization belongs on the sick list when promotion becomes more important to its people than accomplishment in the job they are in. It is sick when it is more concerned with avoiding mistakes than with taking the right risks, with counteracting the weaknesses of its members rather than with building on their strength. But it is sick also when “good human relations” become more important than performance and achievement ... The moment people talk of “implementing” instead of “doing” and of “finalizing” instead of “finishing,” the organization is running a fever.”**

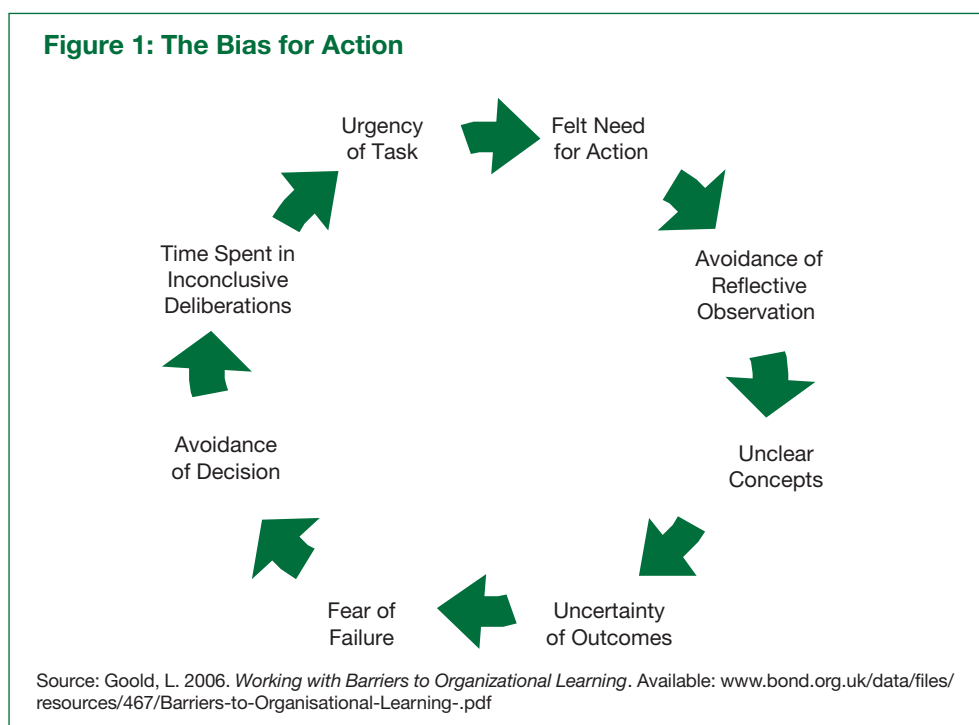
—Peter Drucker

leading to avoidance of decisions. Figure 1 illustrates how these pressures reinforce the bias for action instead of encouraging reflection and inquiry. Process and task must be seen as interdependent, as should reflection and action.

## UNDISCUSSABLES

Behind some pressures that reinforce the bias for action is inability to handle anxiety and fear, compounded by the defensive routines that are built in response. People faced with error, embarrassment, or threat will typically act to avoid these, make the avoidance undiscussable, and make its undiscussability undiscussable. They will do so because they assume that their actions will reduce the likelihood of a situation escalating further. Much energy can be wasted in avoiding controversy; however, it is not potential conflict but the avoidance of action to resolve conflict that causes problems.

<sup>1</sup> These Knowledge Solutions draw in part from Goold, L. 2006. *Working with Barriers to Organizational Learning*. Available: [www.bond.org.uk/data/files/resources/467/Barriers-to-Organisational-Learning-.pdf](http://www.bond.org.uk/data/files/resources/467/Barriers-to-Organisational-Learning-.pdf)


**Table 1: Organizational Responses to Error**

Self-Deceiving Response	Defeated Response	Learning Response
<b>Error Definition</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Failure</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A force beyond control</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A source of information</li> </ul>
<b>Strategic Decision</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The error is hidden or someone is saddled with the blame.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The error is talked about in rich detail but no action is taken.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The error is discussed candidly and corrective actions are attempted.</li> </ul>
<b>Impact on Leadership</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The leadership is (partly) deceived and thinks everything is going exactly to plan.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The leadership is left impotent and the organization becomes immobilized.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The leadership is able to continuously draw on lessons learned.</li> </ul>

Source: Adapted from Korten, D., and R. Klauss, eds. 1984. *People-Centered Development: Contributions Toward Theory and Planning Frameworks*. West Hartford, Connecticut: Kumarian Press.

One approach to undiscussables is to invite speculation, perhaps with the help of a facilitator or with simple guidelines: What is the worst thing that might happen? What would happen if it did? The way to remain scared is to not find out what one is afraid of. Table 1 illustrates three types of organizational responses to error, only one of which assuages the fear of failure that biases action.

## COMMITMENT TO THE CAUSE

The individuals who are drawn to development work acknowledge a basic commitment to reducing poverty. From their perspective, they are altruistic and action oriented. Yet their commitment can become compulsive—the cause is never ending, and if they were to pause and reflect, they may question what they have really been

doing. Some keep “doing” and suffer from exhaustion, cynicism, or burnout. They may also allow an element of self-righteousness to creep in. Hard work, high energy, and dedication to poverty reduction are not, per se, negative or unhealthy at the individual or collective level, but their meaning and purpose and one’s attachment to them must be questioned with an open mind.

## ADVOCACY AT THE EXPENSE OF INQUIRY

In much aid work, more value appears to be given to advocating a position than inquiring about the view of beneficiaries. This gives little opportunity for new insights and concepts to emerge. Many of the universal practices and behaviors of dialogue and inquiry can help, such as the ability to suspend assumptions, listen to one another earnestly, give

**“It is a strange trade that of advocacy. Your intellect, your highest heavenly gift is hung up in the shop window like a loaded pistol for sale.”**

—Thomas Carlyle

voice to what one really thinks, and respect difference. To improve the quality of everyday conversations and make better use of collective spaces for learning, there is an urgent need to develop the art of talking and thinking differently together.

## CULTURAL BIAS

Western cultural assumptions have shaped development work, perhaps also the debates on organizational learning. They are apt to value outputs and outcomes over process, and show a predilection for linear, predictable causality (evidenced, for instance, by the design and monitoring framework, also known as logical framework analysis).<sup>2</sup> East Asian cultures place more emphasis on discussing the problem at hand, after which those present will know what is needed without feeling locked into a specific decision. The rigidity of fixed assumptions apparent in aid agencies should be tempered by insights and concepts such as nonlinearity, edge of chaos, self-organization, emergence, and co-evolution.<sup>3</sup> At the village level, tools that have been found useful include storytelling, community theater, and participatory approaches. *Learning Lessons in ADB*<sup>4</sup> specifies other cultural roadblocks in the form of psychological and social factors.

## PRACTICING WHAT IS PREACHED

Some values and processes that development agencies promote, such as good governance and results-based management, are not practiced internally. At least this raises questions of integrity. If aid agencies reflected on the difficulty of learning in their organizations, they might promote it more sensitively and build absorptive capacity both in-house and elsewhere.

## THE FUNDING ENVIRONMENT

Funding that is tied to particular programs or projects—ironically often to capture “lessons learned”—does not encourage creative thinking and innovation. Nor does it

pave the way for intraorganizational and interorganizational learning, let alone partnerships in developing countries. Second-order forms of learning can be developed without tying funding to prespecified outcomes, such as looking at the qualities and approaches needed for better learning in programs and projects. Elsewhere, where funding is not tied, the constant pressure to demonstrate low overheads may also dissuade aid agencies from investing other resources necessary for effective organizational learning. Elsewhere still, competition for funding may induce fabrication of success stories and detract from constructive self-criticism and analysis, when it does not exacerbate the trend to “go cheap” and claim unrealistically low operating overheads.

## THINKING STRATEGICALLY ABOUT LEARNING

How responsibility for learning is structured reveals much about mind-sets and assumptions in an organization. Where efforts are made to mainstream it, responsibility will tend to be held by an individual post-holder at the middle-management level. Although this can give organizational learning a profile, legislating for learning is dangerous. Learning may be seen as the responsibility of an individual rather than as core to organizational practice and central to the organization’s identity, values, culture, and worldview. Staff members who are held responsible for organizational learning will also often carry some anxiety about conveying clear statements to others (including senior managers). This could restrict the self-organizing potential of learning. If work on organizational learning is to be structured by the circumstances in which the work is to be performed (i.e., if form were to follow function), an organization may find it more useful to tend existing relationships, create spaces for experimentation and for conversations between people to grow across departmental boundaries, support informal links between and across organizations, offer opportunities and support for peer learning, and go where the energy is for as long as that is needed.<sup>5</sup> (This entails offering incentives and rewards for learning.) Given the unpredictable nature of learning, any strategy should be flexible, that is, not bound to specific outcomes. Investigations should start with an inquiry into the existing practices of staff members, the roadblocks that they face in context, and their assumptions about learning. From this, calculated responses might then be explored, experimented with, and learned from iteratively. This approach would shape strategic thinking.

<sup>2</sup> Sponsors of organizational learning tend to flag learning as a process. However, how then should one balance the evaluation of process and that of outcome? If learning is emphasized as a process, the fact that an organization is learning at all is, in itself, highly desirable. Conversely, if priority is given to effectiveness in accomplishing outcomes, learning will be ascribed less importance. Rationally, the way forward can only be found in the right mix of emphasis in various situations.

<sup>3</sup> Ramalingam, B., H. Jones, T. Reba, and J. Young. 2008. Exploring the Science of Complexity: Ideas and Implications for Development and Humanitarian Efforts. *Working Paper 285*. London: Overseas Development Institute. Available: [www.odi.org.uk/publications/working\\_papers/wp285.pdf](http://www.odi.org.uk/publications/working_papers/wp285.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> ADB. 2007. *Learning Lessons in ADB*. Manila. Available: [www.adb.org/documents/reports/learning-lessons-adb/strategic-framework-2007-2009.asp](http://www.adb.org/documents/reports/learning-lessons-adb/strategic-framework-2007-2009.asp)

<sup>5</sup> Interdependent inputs toward these would be a function of the nature of the task, the range of competencies required, the technology (to be) deployed, and the scale of operations.

Figure 2 makes out eight means to focus on and reduce learning anxiety, each of which requires dedicated attention.<sup>6</sup>

## THE ROLE OF LEADERSHIP

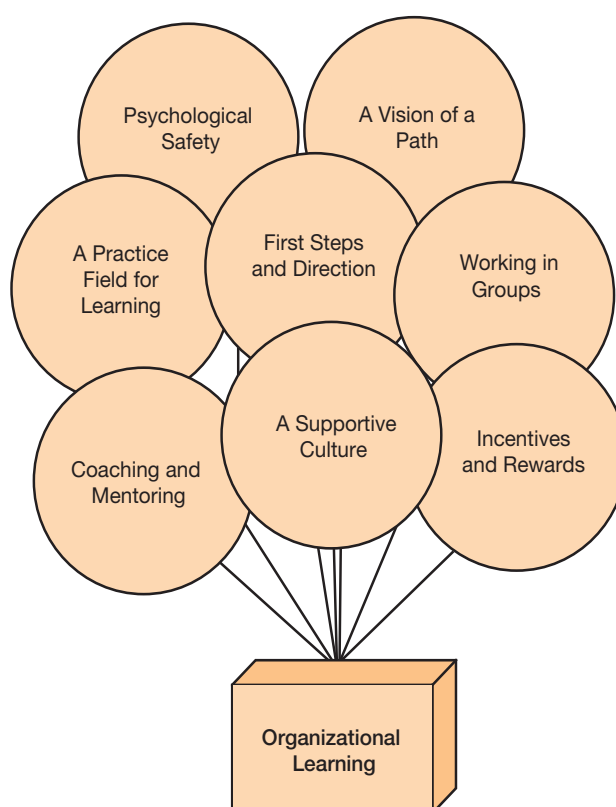
More surprises occur as the result of a failure to act than as the result of a failure to see. Organizations have more to fear from not having strong leadership. It is the leader's responsibility to live the values the organization espouses, set the right tone, and lead truly by example. Much as they must visibly promote the right culture by rewarding those who lead by example, leaders must strengthen or challenge patterns and norms that limit

**“Leadership is based on inspiration, not domination; on cooperation, not intimidation.”**

—William Arthur Wood

learning. Their reactions will be amplified by the position they carry. If they encourage staff members to take on work and then question their judgment, or constantly check on them, they will undermine the staff members and reduce creative thinking, innovation, and risk taking. Leaders must be aware that much value exists in communication, which allows leadership skills—good or bad—to show through. It is important that they seek formal and informal feedback on the impact of their gestures and that they be aware that second-order learning, by its very nature, may work against the improvement initiatives they promote. To recap, the principal role of leaders is to create the conditions within an organization through which staff members will first want to learn, then learn to learn, and finally internalize the habit of continuous learning. Figure 3 identifies broad measures that leaders can take to create the motive, means, and opportunity for learning.

**Figure 2: Overcoming Learning Anxiety**



Source: Developed from Schein, E. 1995. Organizational and Managerial Culture as a Facilitator or Inhibitor of Organizational Transformation. Paper presented to the Inaugural Assembly of Chief Executive and Employers in Singapore. 29 June.

<sup>6</sup> Blaming it on biological determinism, John Cacioppo explains that very early the brain exhibits a “negativity bias,” meaning that it reacts with far more electrical activity to the stimuli of bad news than to good, and that this is seen at the early stages of information processing. Thus, our attitudes are more heavily influenced by downbeat than good news. See Ito, T., J. Larsen, K. Smith, and J. Cacioppo. 2002. Negative Information Weighs More Heavily on the Brain: The Negativity Bias in Evaluative Categorizations. In Cacioppo, J., et al., eds. *Foundations in Social Neuroscience*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press.



**Figure 3: Creating the Motive, Means, and Opportunity**

Source: Developed from Britton, B. 2005. Organizational Learning in NGOs: Creating the Motive, Means and Opportunity. *International NGO Training and Research Center Praxis Paper No. 3*. Available: [www.intrac.org/data/files/resources/398/Praxis-Paper-3-Organisational-Learning-in-NGOs.pdf](http://www.intrac.org/data/files/resources/398/Praxis-Paper-3-Organisational-Learning-in-NGOs.pdf)

## LEARNING TO UNLEARN

Unlearning may be the real challenge of learning. It may be simply characterized as the process of letting go of what is known, with openness and freshness of mind, to create fresh space for new learning to take root. It involves habits one has carried for many years. Learning is intimately part of the elaboration of a system—indeed almost synonymous with it. However, in discovering what must change, the greatest difficulties are often found in its structures and patterns. Consciously reading, assessing, and unlearning these will become fundamental. Ultimately, one may have to concede that it is not policies, strategies, processes, tools, methods, and approaches that define the core and quality of development practice but the past, present, and future, and the openness, judgment, intuition, creativity, integrity, and strength that one can muster to face these that do. In large bureaucratic organizations, unlearning also involves risk and requires psychological safety and the trust on which that rests, and both may be in short supply.

## ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

Although Liz Goold never mentioned hierarchical, centralized, or control-oriented structures, by all accounts, such roadblocks to organizational learning are formidable in most bilateral and

multilateral agencies. Arguments against strong hierarchies are about the division of labor, office politics, and interpersonal relations. Hierarchical, centralized, and control-oriented organizations are inclined to separate thinking and acting, and entrust strategy and policy making to particular departments, offices, and senior managers. Top-down flows are inimical to teamwork within and across units. What is more, the structure fires up office politics: the priority of staff members is not learning but protecting or advancing their position, unit, or budget. To these, mastery of the operating system is of greater consequence than appreciating the context and probing the quality of a policy or operation. Conformity—not local accountability, flexibility, innovation, or critical reflection—is rewarded. To boot, field staff members find themselves at the bottom of the hierarchy, their views and interpretations overlooked or overruled. Capacity to learn is interrelated with power and authority in the sense that opportunity (time, space, and priority) to learn depends on where one stands in the hierarchy.

## KNOWLEDGE INACTION

Goold also omitted to mention the inadequacy of information systems. Information overload<sup>7</sup> is common in most aid agencies, but information and communication technologies for

<sup>7</sup> The exception is baseline data and information, which are critical to track progress and make changes if necessary during implementation of an operation, and to monitor and report on its contributions to outcomes.

collaboration mechanisms, knowledge sharing and learning, and knowledge capture and storage are underdeveloped, under-resourced, or inefficient in all but a few.<sup>8</sup> There is a problem, then, with identifying, creating, storing, sharing, and using quality data and information—synonymous with poor knowledge management. Bottom-up, formal routine reporting in hierarchical organizations has limited learning value. The emphasis is on outputs; accomplishments, not problems, are brought to light; time frames are too short. Reporting is seen as an obligation rather than an opportunity for ongoing, collective, interactive, and inquisitive conversation and dialogue based on quality data and information. By poor knowledge management, hierarchical organizations create self-supporting systems of misinformation.

### FALSE IMAGES

Moreover, development agencies may have fallen victim to the false portrayal of their work as quick and simple. Even now, the sometimes surreal expectations of taxpayers continue to be fueled by annual reports highlighting success stories. Despite the high level of uncertainty of development work, there is pressure to be able to predict, if not appear infallible. In opposition, critics argue that development agencies have failed profoundly. With better public education work, development agencies can generate a more insightful understanding of the complexity of the work with which they are tasked (or task themselves).

### (LACK OF) PENALTIES FOR NOT LEARNING

Additionally, the absence of a market test for aid agencies removes the discipline that forces a business to change its ways or go bankrupt. They do not have profit margins, which ultimately depend on client interest and satisfaction. (In quite opposite ways, the beneficiaries of development programs and projects often have little voice and choice.) Therefore, aid agencies are tasked with measuring the larger part of their own performance (notwithstanding the small share of operations examined by independent evaluation) and, in so doing, downplay problems and failures. None of this, however, offers a good excuse for not learning; on the contrary, such arguments underscore learning as a necessity and priority. However, sadly, the judgment that an avoidable mistake in development work has been committed cannot always be argued beyond reasonable doubt—this does not ease the formulation of penalties for not learning, at least not immediately. Additionally, if indulgence for learning lessons were not granted and fair penalties for avoidable mistakes were formulated, how much time should one wait before witnessing improvements in performance at individual, team, cross-functional, operational, and strategic levels?

**Multiplying Agendas.** The combined efforts of shareholders and (advocacy) nongovernment organizations to make aid agencies do a better job of development (by their criteria) tie them down with procedural requirements and prompt them to expand agendas to build coalitions of support. The circle is vicious; promises are not met, and these parties ratchet up requirements with tighter audits of compliance and the instigation of penalties for noncompliant staff members. In situations of no budgetary growth, the broadening scope of work puts staff members in a bind and undermines (when it does not prevent) learning. Conversely, growing operating costs may reduce demand from borrowing governments.

### EXCLUSION

Development agencies recruit professional staff members from the international market and local staff members from applicants residing in duty station countries. It cannot be assumed that they share the same space for learning. In 2003, a study<sup>9</sup> of the humanitarian sector found that international staff members accessed about 10 times more explicit knowledge assets from their organizations than their national counterparts. International staff members also attended meetings at approximately 10 times the rate of national staff members. Thus, how national staff members learn and are assisted in their learning and development is of central importance to the effectiveness of their agencies. Conversely,

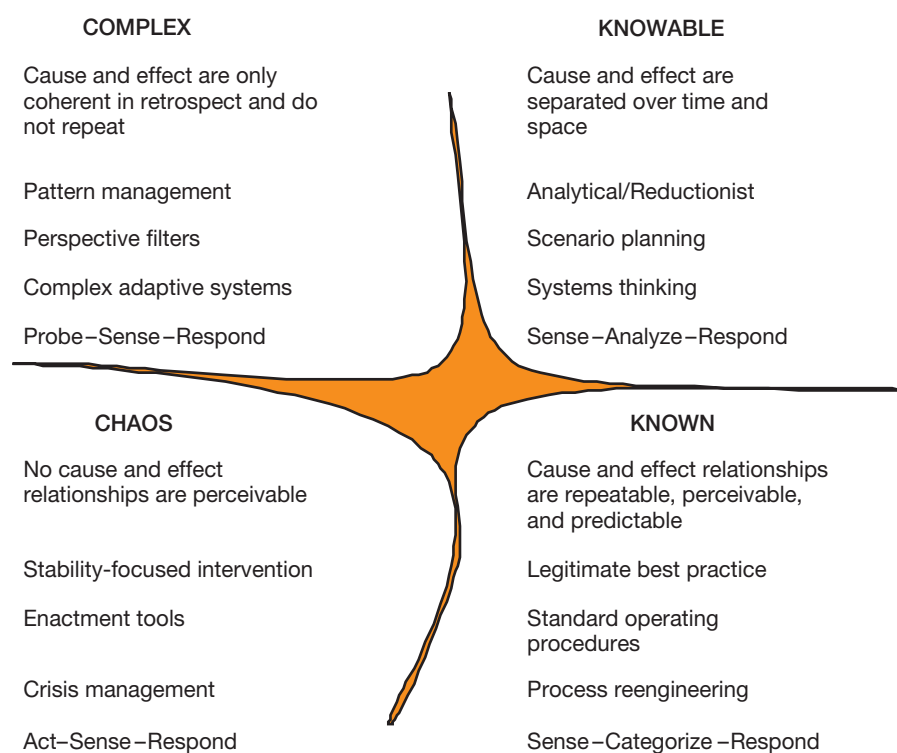
**“I know that most men, including those at ease with problems of the greatest complexity, can seldom accept even the simplest and most obvious truth if it be such as would oblige them to admit the falsity of conclusions which they have delighted in explaining to colleagues, which they have proudly taught to others, and which they have woven, thread by thread, into the fabric of their lives.”**

—Leo Tolstoy

their importance as sources of “real” knowledge (including history) and their ability to approach things the right way are undervalued if not ignored. Only rarely are they seen as worthy of investment, supported, or given incentives. This waste of key knowledge assets is compounded by the fact that professional staff members characteristically move on when projects and programs end.

<sup>8</sup> Auditing the Lessons Architecture shows with a real-life example how a survey of perceptions conducted in 2007 provided entry points against which the Operations Evaluation Department (now the Independent Evaluation Department) in the Asian Development Bank can take measures to tie in with audiences in these areas. See ADB. 2008. *Auditing the Lessons Architecture*. Manila: ADB. Available: [www.adb.org/documents/studies/auditing-lessons-architecture/in371-07.asp](http://www.adb.org/documents/studies/auditing-lessons-architecture/in371-07.asp)

<sup>9</sup> Active Learning Network for Accountability and Performance in Humanitarian Action. 2004. *Learning by Field Level Workers*. In ALNAP Review of Humanitarian Action in 2003. London. Available: [www.alnap.org/pool/files/fch201bl.pdf](http://www.alnap.org/pool/files/fch201bl.pdf)

**Figure 4: Sense-Making in a Complex and Complicated World**

Source: Kurtz, C., and D. Snowden. 2003. The New Dynamics of Strategy: Sense-Making in a Complex and Complicated World. *IBM Systems Journal*. 42 (3). pp. 462–483.

## COMPLEXITY

Cultural bias suggests why development aid follows a linear approach to achieving outputs and outcomes. That approach is guided by business processes (and associated compliance standards) applied with limited and out-of-date insights on dynamic operational contexts. Any planning process is based on assumptions<sup>10</sup>—some will be predictable, others wishful. If the assumptions are based on invalid theories of change (including cause-and-effect relationships) and on inappropriate tools, methods, approaches, and procedures derived from those, development agencies will jeopardize the impacts that they seek to realize. Yet the cultural perspective draws insufficient conclusions about what complexity thinking should mean for development interventions. How might

emerging insights from the complexity sciences and systems thinking, combined with field practice, systemically (rather than through a patchwork approach) reshape assumptions about the design of development assistance, improve reading of signals, and foster appropriate adapting of actions? What might be the implications of a shift from compliance with external standards to investing in capacities for navigating complexity? Figure 4 portrays a framework to help make sense of a range of unspecified problems, preferably collectively. The framework has five domains, four of which are named, and a fifth central area, which is the domain of disorder. The right-hand domains are those of order; the left-hand domains are those of un-order. ■

<sup>10</sup> Cynthia Kurtz and David Snowden identified three basic, universal assumptions prevalent in organizational decision support and strategy: assumptions of order, of rational choice, and of intent. See Kurtz, C., and D. Snowden. 2003. The New Dynamics of Strategy: Sense-Making in a Complex and Complicated World. *IBM Systems Journal*. 42 (3). pp. 462–483.

## FURTHER READING

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- . 2009. *Learning for Change in ADB*. Manila. Available:  
[www.adb.org/documents/books/learning-for-change/  
default.asp](http://www.adb.org/documents/books/learning-for-change/default.asp)



## STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT

A strategy is a long-term plan of action designed to achieve a particular goal.

# Reading the Future

Scenario-building enables managers to invent and then consider in depth several varied stories of equally plausible futures. They can then make strategic decisions that will be sound for all plausible futures. No matter what future takes place, one is more likely to be ready for and influential in it if one has thought seriously about scenarios. Scenario planning challenges mental models about the world and lifts the blinders that limit our creativity and resourcefulness.



## RATIONALE

The future will not happen just because one wishes hard. It requires action now. Because nothing lasts forever and no product or service sells itself for long, small businesses and large organizations (individuals too, for that matter) have no alternative but to forerun the future, endeavor to shape it, and balance short-term and long-term objectives. This means that the short term calls for strategic decisions just as much as the long term. And so, strategic planning stands for the unremitting process of making decisions systematically with the greatest intelligence of their futurity, organizing the resources and efforts needed to carry them out, and measuring outcomes against expectations with feedback and self-control. Only then can one avoid extending carelessly past and present trends.

## READJUSTING MINDSETS

More often than not, however, strategic planning holds out only one scenario that underplays the unpredictability of the world. That future stands for the set of assumptions implicit to blind spots. Yet, the point is not to pick an ideal future, hope that it will come to pass, or even strive to create it. Nor is it to find the most probable future and bet the house on it. Rather, it is to make decisions that will be suitable for all plausible futures. That is why the challenge is to develop a small set of distinct scenarios covering the main areas of uncertainty—and in so doing, define direction without confining it.

## THINKING THE UNTHINKABLE

A scenario is an internally consistent view of the future. Scenario analysis is the process of generating and analyzing a small set of scenarios. This exercise stretches mental models, enhancing perception of events as part of a pattern, and leads to better thinking about the future. Scenario analysis involves discrete steps (explained by Peter Schwartz in *The Art of the Long View*).

- **Uncovering the Focal Issue.** For small businesses and large organizations alike, “What should our business be?” is usually the first (and natural) question. If not, the focal issue should be what keeps one awake at night.
- **Making Out Key Factors.** Once the focal issue has been decided on, the next step is to identify the key factors in one’s environment. What will managers want to know when they have to make choices? What will be seen as success or failure?
- **Listing Driving Forces.** Then, after the key factors have been identified, the third step involves listing candidates for prime movers (driving forces) that will impact the key factors. They lie in society, technology, economics, politics, and the natural environment. This is, without doubt, the most research-intensive stage of the process of generating and analyzing scenarios; it requires much information hunting and gathering.
- **Ranking Driving Forces.** Next, comes the ranking of driving forces based on two main criteria—the degree of importance vis-à-vis the focal issue, and the degree of uncertainty surrounding each driving force. The outcome of such ranking will, effectively, draw the lines along which scenarios differ. However, if scenarios are to serve as learning tools, the lessons that they teach must be fundamental to the resolution of the focal issue. So, the driving forces must also be few to curtail generation of scenarios around every conceivable uncertainty.
- **Fleshing Out Scenarios.** The scenario skeletons can then be fleshed out with regard to the key factors in one’s environment and the driving forces identified. Every one of them should be given some attention in each scenario.
- **Drawing Implications.** Once the scenarios have been fleshed out, it is time to return to the focal issue and examine how it comes across in each scenario. What vulnerabilities have been revealed? Is a strategy robust across all scenarios?



And, if it looks robust in only one instance, then it qualifies as a gamble.

- **Selecting Indicators.** Last, it is important to know quickly which of the several scenarios is closest to the course of history as it plays out. And so, one must identify indicators to monitor. Fortunately, the coherence built into the scenarios makes easy the selection of indicators.

### ABANDONING STALE PURSUITS

The end result of building scenarios is not an accurate picture of tomorrow but better thinking about the future. And, since scenarios provide a context for decisions, better thinking should lead to more robust decisions. Still, just as important as the permanent process of making decisions about what things to do is planned and systematic abandonment of the old that no longer fits purpose, conveys satisfaction, or makes a contribution. As events unfold, it is therefore necessary to

continue to review existing products and services (as well as processes and distribution channels). Do they still fit the realities of society, technology, economics, politics, and the natural environment? And, if not, how can one discard them, or at least stop devoting more resources and efforts? Otherwise, the best definition of the focal issue will turn out to have been a thankless exercise. Energy will be used up in defending yesterday, that people bring to the process. To develop trust, it is necessary to draw out and deal with suspicions from past contacts; be open about what one is trying to achieve and about problems; be prepared to make mistakes and to admit to them; and deliver what one promises. ■

### FURTHER READING

Peter Schwartz. 1996. *The Art of the Long View: Planning for the Future in an Uncertain World*. New York: Doubleday.



# Social Network Analysis

Power no longer resides exclusively (if at all) in states, institutions, or large corporations. It is located in the networks that structure society. Social network analysis seeks to understand networks and their participants and has two main focuses: the actors and the relationships between them in a specific social context.



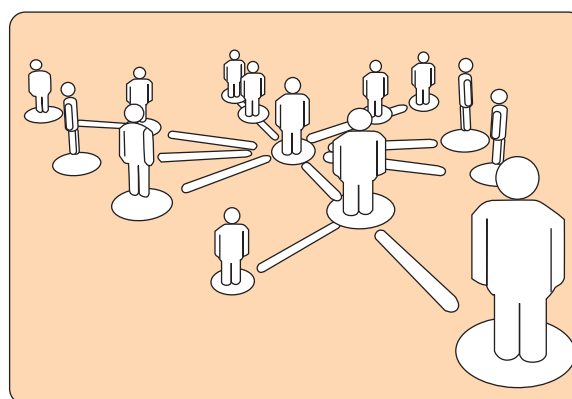
## RATIONALE

The information revolution has given birth to new economies structured around flows of data, information, and knowledge. In parallel, social networks<sup>1</sup> have grown stronger as forms of organization of human activity.<sup>2</sup> Social networks are nodes of individuals, groups, organizations, and related systems that tie in one or more types of interdependencies: these include shared values, visions, and ideas; social contacts; kinship; conflict; financial exchanges; trade; joint membership in organizations; and group participation in events, among numerous other aspects of human relationships.<sup>3</sup> Indeed, it sometimes appears as though networked organizations outcompete all other forms of organization<sup>4</sup>—certainly, they outpace vertical, rigid, command-and-control bureaucracies. When they succeed, social networks influence larger social processes by accessing human, social, natural, physical, and financial capital, as well as the information and knowledge content of these. (In development work, they can impact policies, strategies, programs, and projects—including their design, implementation, and results—and the partnerships that often underpin these.) To date, however, we are still far from being able to construe their public and organizational power in ways that can harness their potential. Understanding when, why, and how they function best is important. Here, social network analysis can help.

## DEFINITION

The defining feature of social network analysis is its focus on the structure of relationships, ranging from casual acquaintance to close bonds.<sup>5</sup> Social network analysis assumes that relationships are important. It maps and measures formal

**Figure 1: A Social Network**



Source: Rachael King. 2006. CEO Guide to Technology: Social Networks—Who's Harnessing Social Networks? *BusinessWeek*. Available: [http://images.businessweek.com/ss/06/09/ceo\\_socnet/source/1.htm](http://images.businessweek.com/ss/06/09/ceo_socnet/source/1.htm)

<sup>1</sup> The term was coined by John Barnes in 1954.

<sup>2</sup> Information and communication technologies explain much but not all. The other agents that have catalyzed social networks include globalization; the diversification of policy making to include more nongovernmental actors, e.g., civil and nongovernment organizations, under the banner of good governance; growing recognition of the importance of social capital; and practical applications in knowledge management and organizational learning.

<sup>3</sup> "Social networks" is an umbrella term that covers many forms and functions, with each node having distinct relative worth. (Sometimes, nodes are used to represent events, ideas, or objects.) Communities of practice are an important form. Others include policy and advocacy networks that work on problem identification and agenda setting, policy formulation, policy implementation, and policy monitoring and evaluation; private–public policy networks; knowledge networks; etc. (Increasingly, social networks are social communities of the web, connected via electronic mail, websites and web logs, and networking applications such as Twitter, Facebook, Lotus Quickr, or LinkedIn.) Functions differ, too, with nodes behaving as filters, amplifiers, investors and providers, convenors, community builders, and/or facilitators.

<sup>4</sup> In such instances, their strengths arise, among others, from (i) a unifying purpose and clear coordination structure; (ii) multiple, interactive communications (spanning both horizontal and vertical dimensions) that encourage simultaneous action; (iii) dynamism and creativity (owing to multiple, interactive communications between members); (iv) consensus (born of like-minded actors who rally around shared interests or a common issue); (v) strength in numbers; (vi) the quality and packaging of evidence; (vii) sustainability; and (viii) representativeness.

<sup>5</sup> This is in contrast with other areas of the social sciences where the focus is often on the attributes of agents rather than on the relations between them.



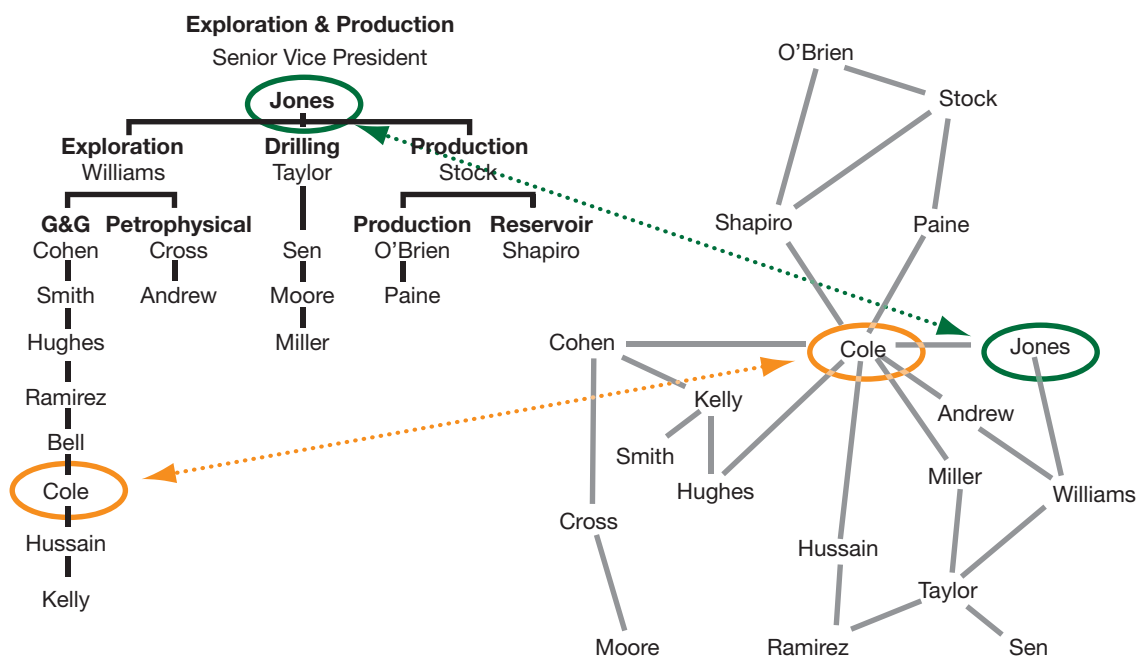
and informal relationships to understand what facilitates or impedes the knowledge flows that bind interacting units, viz., who knows whom, and who shares what information and knowledge with whom by what communication media (e.g., data and information, voice, or video communications).<sup>6</sup> (Because these relationships are not usually readily discernible, social network analysis is somewhat akin to an “organizational x-ray.”) Social network analysis is a method with increasing application in the social sciences and has been applied in areas as diverse as psychology, health, business organization, and electronic communications. More recently, interest has grown in analysis of leadership networks to sustain and strengthen their relationships within and across groups, organizations, and related systems.

## BENEFITS

We use people to find content, but we also use content to find people. If they are understood better relationships and knowledge flows can be measured, monitored, and evaluated, perhaps (for instance) to enhance organizational performance. The results of a social network analysis might be used to

- Identify the individuals, teams, and units who play central roles.
- Discern information breakdowns,<sup>7</sup> bottlenecks,<sup>8</sup> structural holes, as well as isolated individuals, teams, and units.
- Make out opportunities to accelerate knowledge flows across functional and organizational boundaries.
- Strengthen the efficiency and effectiveness of existing, formal communication channels.

**Figure 2: Formal versus Informal Structure in a Petroleum Organization**



Source: Rob Cross, Andrew Parker, Laurence Prusak, and Stephen Borgatti. 2001. Knowing What We Know: Supporting Knowledge Creation and Sharing in Social Networks. *Organizational Dynamics*. Elsevier Science, Inc. 30 (2). pp. 100–120.

<sup>6</sup> In contrast, an organization chart shows formal relationships only—who works where, and who reports to whom. Ten years ago, Henry Mintzberg and Ludo Van der Heyden therefore suggested the use of “organigraphs” to map an organization’s functions and the ways people organize themselves in it. See Henry Mintzberg and Ludo Van der Heyden. 1999. Organigraphs: Drawing How Companies Really Work. *Harvard Business Review*. September–October. pp. 87–94.

<sup>7</sup> Breakdowns in information occur most often at one or more of five common boundaries: (i) functional (i.e., breakdowns between individuals, teams, or units; (ii) geographic i.e., breakdowns between geographically separated locations); (iii) hierarchical (i.e., breakdowns between personnel of different levels), (iv) tenure (i.e., breakdowns between long-time personnel and new personnel); and (v) organizational (i.e., breakdowns among leadership networks).

<sup>8</sup> Bottlenecks are central nodes that provide the only connection between different parts of a network.

- Raise awareness of and reflection on the importance of informal networks and ways to enhance their organizational performance.
- Leverage peer support.
- Improve innovation and learning.
- Refine strategies.

Development work, for one, is more often than not about social relationships. Hence, the social network representation of a development assistance project or program would enable attention to be quickly focused (to whatever level of complexity is required) on who is influencing whom (both directly and indirectly). (Outcome mapping is another method that attempts to shift the focus from changes in state, viz., reduced poverty, to changes in behaviors, relationships, actions, and activities.) Since a social network perspective is, inherently, a multi-actor perspective, social network analysis can also offset the limitations of logic models (results frameworks).

## PROCESS

Typically, social network analysis relies on questionnaires and interviews to gather information about the relationships within a defined group. The responses gathered are then mapped. (Social network analysis software exists for the purpose.)<sup>9</sup> This data gathering and analysis process provides baseline information against which one can then prioritize and plan interventions to improve knowledge flows, which may entail recasting social connections.

Notwithstanding the more complex processes followed by some, which can entail sifting through surfeits of information with increasingly powerful social network analysis software, social network analysis encourages at heart participative and interpretative approaches to the description and analysis of

social networks, preferably with a focus on the simplest and most useful basics. Key stages of the basic process will typically require practitioners to

- Identify the network of individuals, teams, and units to be analyzed.
- Gather background information, for example, by interviewing senior managers and key staff to understand specific needs and issues.
- Define the objective and clarify the scope of the analysis, and agree on the reporting required.
- Formulate hypotheses and questions.
- Develop the survey methodology
- Design the questionnaire, keeping questions short and straight to the point. (Both open-ended and closed questions can be used.)<sup>10</sup>
- Survey the individuals, teams, and units in the network to identify the relationships and knowledge flows between them.
- Use a social network analysis tool to visually map out the network.
- Review the map and the problems and opportunities highlighted using interviews and/or workshops.
- Design and implement actions to bring about desired changes.
- Map the network again after a suitable period of time. (Social network analysis can also serve as an evaluation tool.) ■

## FURTHER READING

International Network for Social Network Analysis. 2008.

Available: [www.insna.org](http://www.insna.org)

<sup>9</sup> Sociograms, or visual representations of social networks, are important to understand network data and convey the result of the analysis. Free and commercial social network analysis tools are at hand, each with different functionality. They include UCINET, Pajek, NetMiner, and Netdraw. In each case, the graphics generated are based on three types of data and information: (i) the nodes that represent the individuals, groups, or organizations being studied; (ii) the ties that represent the different relationships among the nodes (which may be insufficient, just right, or excessive); and (iii) the attributes that make up the different characteristics of the individuals, groups, or organizations being studied. Key measurements apply to the centrality of the social network analyzed; the make-up of its various subgroups (which can develop their own subcultures and negative attitudes toward other groups); and the nature of ties (viz., direction, distance, and density).

<sup>10</sup> Typical questions are: Who knows who and how well? How well do people know each other's knowledge and skills? Who or what gives people information about xyz? What resources do people use to find information about xyz? What resources do people use to share information about xyz?



### STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT

A strategy is a long-term plan of action designed to achieve a particular goal.

# The Sustainable Livelihoods Approach

The sustainable livelihoods approach improves understanding of the livelihoods of the poor. It organizes the factors that constrain or enhance livelihood opportunities, and shows how they relate. It can help plan development activities and assess the contribution that existing activities have made to sustaining livelihoods.



## LIVELIHOODS

A livelihood comprises the capabilities, assets, and activities required for a means of living. It is deemed sustainable when it can cope with and recover from stresses and shocks and maintain or enhance its capabilities, assets, and activities both now and in the future, while not undermining the natural resource base.

## THE SUSTAINABLE LIVELIHOODS APPROACH

The sustainable livelihoods approach is a way of thinking about the objectives, scope, and priorities for development activities. It is based on evolving thinking about the way the poor and vulnerable live their lives and the importance of policies and institutions. It helps formulate development activities that are

- People-centered
- Responsive and participatory
- Multilevel
- Conducted in partnership with the public and private sectors
- Dynamic
- Sustainable

The sustainable livelihoods approach facilitates the identification of practical priorities for actions that are based on the views and interests of those concerned but they are not a panacea. It does not replace other tools, such as participatory development, sector-wide approaches, or integrated rural development. However, it makes the connection between people and the overall enabling environment that influences the outcomes of livelihood strategies. It brings attention to bear on the inherent potential of people in terms of their skills, social networks, access to physical and financial resources, and ability to influence core institutions.

Appreciative inquiry—originally developed as a tool for industry to avoid negative approaches to problem solving—

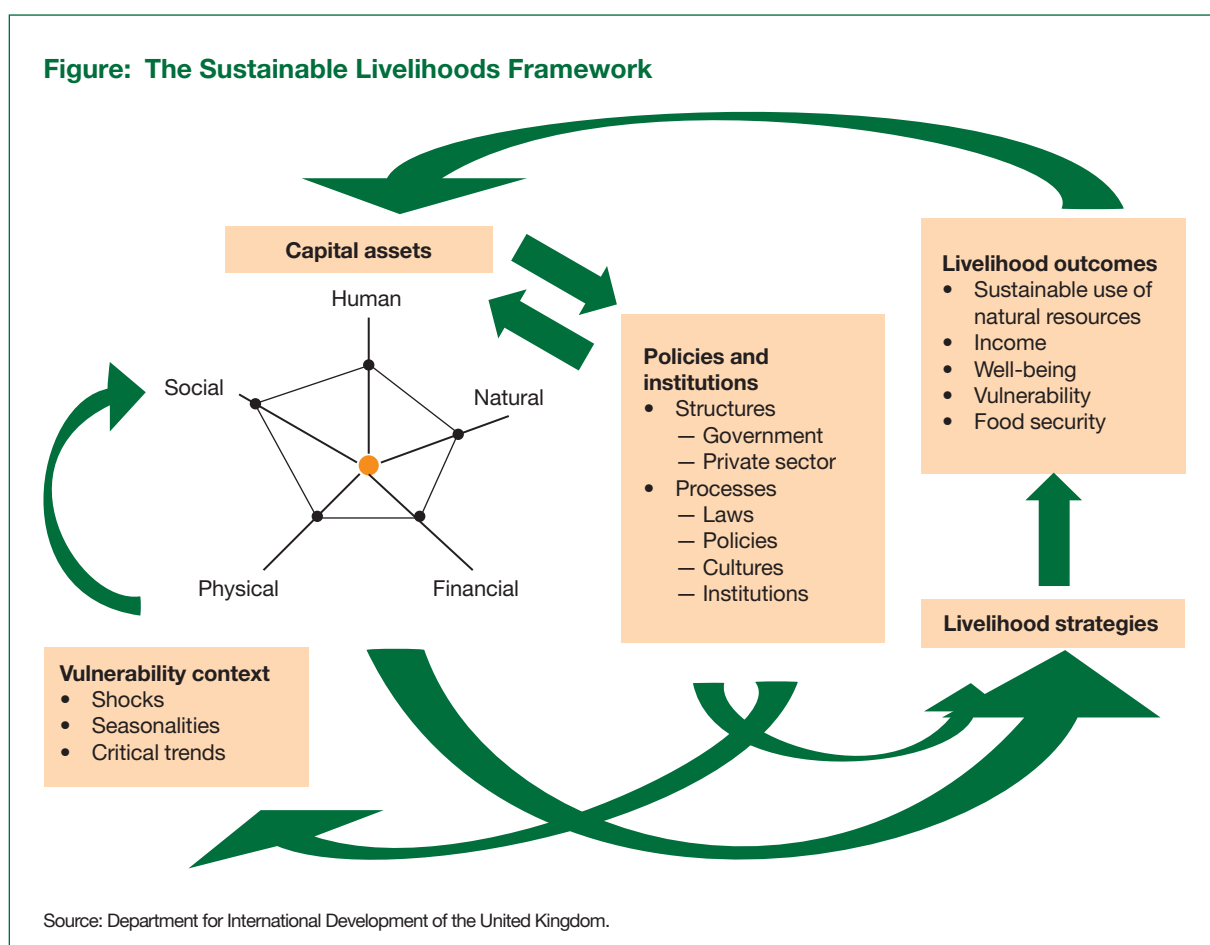
extends this constructive outlook. Appreciative inquiry is a highly inclusive process that maximizes the positive (as opposed to minimizing the negative) in which a community takes responsibility for generating and gathering information and then forms strategies based on the most positive experiences of the past.

## CAPITAL ASSETS

The sustainable livelihoods framework helps to organize the factors that constrain or enhance livelihood opportunities and shows how they relate to one another. A central notion is that different households have different access livelihood assets, which the sustainable livelihood approach aims to expand. The livelihood assets, which the poor must often make trade-offs and choices about, comprise

- **Human capital**, e.g., health, nutrition, education, knowledge and skills, capacity to work, capacity to adapt
- **Social capital**, e.g., networks and connections (patronage, neighborhoods, kinship), relations of trust and mutual understanding and support, formal and informal groups, shared values and behaviors, common rules and sanctions, collective representation, mechanisms for participation in decision making, leadership
- **Natural capital**, e.g., land and produce, water and aquatic resources, trees and forest products, wildlife, wild foods and fibers, biodiversity, environmental services
- **Physical capital**, e.g., infrastructure (transport, roads, vehicles, secure shelter and buildings, water supply and sanitation, energy, communications), tools and technology (tools and equipment for production, seed, fertilizer, pesticides, traditional technology)
- **Financial capital**,<sup>1</sup> e.g., savings, credit and debt (formal, informal), remittances, pensions, wages.

<sup>1</sup> Financial capital tends to be the least available livelihood asset of the poor. Indeed, it is because the poor lack it that the other types of capital are so important to them.

**Figure: The Sustainable Livelihoods Framework**

## VULNERABILITY CONTEXT

Vulnerability is characterized as insecurity in the well-being of individuals, households, and communities in the face of changes in their external environment. People move in and out of poverty and the concept of vulnerability captures the processes of change better than poverty line measurements. Vulnerability has two facets: an external side of shocks, seasonalities, and critical trends; and an internal side of defenselessness caused by lack of ability and means to cope with these. The vulnerability context includes

- shocks, e.g., conflict, illnesses, floods, storms, droughts, pests, diseases
- seasonalities, e.g., prices, and employment opportunities
- critical trends, e.g., demographic, environmental, economic, governance, and technological trends.

## POLICIES AND INSTITUTIONS

Livelihood strategies and outcomes are not just dependent on access to capital assets or constrained by the vulnerability context; they are also transformed by the environment of structures and processes. Structures are the public and private sector organizations that set and implement policy and legislation; deliver services; and purchase, trade, and perform all manner of other functions that affect livelihoods.

Processes embrace the laws, regulations, policies, operational arrangements, agreements, societal norms, and practices that, in turn, determine the way in which structures operate. Policy-determining structures cannot be effective in the absence of appropriate institutions and processes through which policies can be implemented. Processes are important to every aspect of livelihoods. They provide incentives that stimulate people to make better choices. They grant or deny access to assets. They enable people to transform one type of asset into another through markets. They have a strong influence on interpersonal relations. One of the main problems the poor and vulnerable face is that the processes which frame their livelihoods may systematically restrict them unless the government adopts pro-poor policies that, in turn, filter down to legislation and even less formal processes.

## LIVELIHOOD STRATEGIES AND OUTCOMES

Livelihood strategies aim to achieve livelihood outcomes. Decisions on livelihood strategies may invoke natural resource-based activities, non-natural resource based and off-farm activities, migration and remittances, pensions and grants, intensification versus diversification, and short-term versus long-term outcomes, some of which may compete. (One of the many problems of development is that projects and programs, while

favoring some, can disadvantage others.)<sup>2</sup> Potential livelihood outcomes can include more income, increased well-being, reduced vulnerability, improved food security, more sustainable use of the natural resource base, and recovered human dignity, between which there may again also be conflict.

## IMPLICATIONS

The sustainable livelihoods approach encourages thinking out of the box. It frees development practitioners from conventional approaches that are often restricted to identifying problems and finding solutions. It invites them to look at contexts and relationships so that development activities can become more process oriented. It compels them to look for multiple entry points and to move beyond a homogenous “community” view and a narrow sectoral perspective. It represents an important

shift away from the focus on project inputs and outputs and the assumed mechanical links between them. In particular, the sustainable livelihoods approach stresses the importance of understanding institutions by mapping the institutional framework and linking the micro to the macro and the formal to the informal. Therefore, it calls for a new style of policy appraisal that moves from universal prescriptions to context-specific approaches that allow alternative, local perspectives to reveal themselves in the policy framework.

## CAVEAT

The sustainable livelihoods approach is only one way of organizing the complex issues that surround poverty. It must also be made appropriate to local circumstances and local priorities. ■

### Box: Sustainable Livelihoods Frameworks – Strengths and Weaknesses

Strength	Weakness
Seeks to understand changing combinations of modes of livelihood in a dynamic and historical context	Underplays elements of the vulnerability context, such as macroeconomic trends and conflict
Explicitly advocates a creative tension between different levels of analysis and emphasizes the importance of macro- and micro-linkages	Assumes that capital assets can be expanded in generalized and incremental fashion
Acknowledges the need to move beyond narrow sectoral perspectives and emphasizes seeing the linkages between sectors	Does not pay enough attention to inequalities of power
Calls for investigation of the relationships between different activities that constitute livelihoods and draws attention to social relations	Underplays the fact that enhancing the livelihoods of one group can undermine those of another

Source: Author.

## FURTHER READING

ADB. 2004. *Tonle Sap Initiative Brochures: Tonle Sap Sustainable Livelihoods*. Manila. Available: [www.adb.org/projects/tonle\\_sap/tonle-sap-200412.pdf](http://www.adb.org/projects/tonle_sap/tonle-sap-200412.pdf)

Livelihoods Connect. 2008. Available: [www.livelihoods.org/index.html](http://www.livelihoods.org/index.html)

<sup>2</sup> There is no quick fix for this problem. Its existence underlines the need to give choice and opportunities to the poor and build their ability to take advantage of these, and extend safety nets for those who still cannot achieve their livelihood objectives in a competitive environment.



## STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT

A strategy is a long-term plan of action designed to achieve a particular goal.



# Management Techniques



# Conducting Effective Meetings

Meetings bring people together to discuss a predetermined topic. However, too many are poorly planned and managed, and therefore fail to satisfy objectives when they do not simply waste time. The operating expenses of time wasted include related meeting expenditures, salaries, and opportunity costs.



## BACKGROUND

When did you last join a work-related meeting<sup>1</sup> that was productive and fun from beginning to end? That is, a meeting that had lucid objectives<sup>2</sup> and a well-designed agenda; engaged all participants all the time; made them laugh; reached decisions; clarified follow-up actions; and secured commitment to achieve expected, positive, and constructive outcomes? Can you remember?

## MANAGING MEETINGS

Meetings are essential in any form of human enterprise. These days, they are so common that turning the resources they tie up into sustained results is a priority in high-performance organizations. This is because they are potential time wasters: the other persons present may not respect their own time as much as you have come to respect yours, and it is therefore unlikely that they will mind wasting your time.<sup>3</sup>

Generic actions before, during, and after can make meetings more effective.

## THE CHAIRPERSON'S ROLE

A good chairperson is essential to the conduct of effective meetings. In any order, expectations are that the chairperson will stimulate and inspire (not dictate), have the right answers, make decisions, and get things done. But what exactly are those skills and qualities that make someone a good chairperson? He or she must be authoritative yet flexible; impartial and impersonal; a quick thinker and an attentive listener; capable of succinct expression; ready to clarify views that have not been well expressed; mature and tolerant; equipped to handle disruption and inappropriate behavior; and courteous, but brisk and business-like. Humor can be a useful tool, if only to calm rising tempers. To manage difficult meetings, an essential characteristic of a good chairperson must surely be “helicopter vision.”<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> This issue focuses only on programmed meetings of more than two persons.

<sup>2</sup> Possible aims might be to engage in joint consultation, develop support for action, and resolve problems.

<sup>3</sup> Time is a precious asset. (Charles Darwin held that a man who dares to waste 1 hour has not discovered the value of life.) Therefore, it is important to develop a personal sense of time, both to save and spend it wisely. In organizations, the activities that consume time include committees, working groups, and task forces; interviews; discussions; learning and development; telephone conversations; typing; reading; inspecting; traveling; and thinking. It is illuminating to keep a time log and find what a comparatively small percentage of one's time is actually absorbed by the top-priority tasks on one's “to-do” list.

<sup>4</sup> “Helicopter vision” is the ability and motivation to examine problems from a different perspective with concurrent attention to their details, place problems within a broader context by detecting relationships with systems of wider scope, and formulate and deliver one's work accordingly but based on a personal vision.





## Generic Tips for Meeting Management

Before	During	After
Make sure you need a meeting by asking what would happen if it were not held.	Arrange skilled facilitation to smooth the process of the meeting and deal with conflict, start on schedule, and manage time to keep the meeting focused and moving.	Publish within 24 hours, but preferably on the same working day, concise and definite minutes that record the items discussed, the decisions of the meeting, the actions agreed, and the owners of these. In some cases, the minutes may include the main arguments or steps leading to the decisions.
Develop (and prepublish) a strategic agenda (and related papers) with easily understood objectives listed in order of importance, articulate the process to reach these, and plan the meeting and its ground rules.	Introduce the topics for discussion, use the prework delivered for the meeting, and keep debates relevant to the stated objectives.	Arrange effective meeting follow-up, i.e., who will do what by when.
Ensure appropriate participation at the meeting, with attention to good decision makers and problem solvers, for a maximum of 12 persons but, if possible, fewer.	Ensure everyone's thoughts and ideas are heard to keep them interested and empowered, use humor to alleviate tension, gain consensus, and involve each participant in actions toward explicit outcomes.	Agree on accountability for preparations toward the next meeting if one is necessary.
Plan, assign, and distribute, prework before the meeting.	Recognize degrees of feelings and changes of opinion, check for quorum, summarize key points of agreement and disagreement, explain rulings, check understanding and acceptance, create an effective follow-up plan, state responsibilities, gain commitment, and close the meeting on time (or even before time) on a positive note and with a sense of gathering.	Evaluate the meeting process for continuous improvement, for example, regarding ground rules, timing and scheduling, agendas, and the drafting of minutes.

Notes: Before calling a meeting, consider whether the matter might not be dealt better by telephone, electronic mail, or meetings with individuals. Often, 10 minutes spent with six persons individually are more productive than gathering them in a room for 1 hour. If a meeting is to be held, the objectives should be clear, specific, measurable, attainable, realistic, and time bound. Preferably, they should also be agreed, challenging, consistent, worthwhile, and participative. Time-honored rules are to raise hands (stay in order) except for points of clarification or process; refrain from interrupting the speaker; keep to the subject; be concise (and avoid repeating others); and be respectful and polite. These days, electronics are to be put on silent mode and no telephone calls are allowed unless one steps out. "Parking lots," i.e., posts on a wall, can be used for issues not on the agenda.

Source: Author.

## DIFFERENT KINDS OF MEETINGS

To practice with effect the generic tips for meeting management given above, a chairperson must also act on the knowledge that different kinds of meetings take place in working life. Each has its own nature and challenges (even though any one may have attributes of two or three of these). The kinds of meetings are

- **Briefings.** A briefing is called to direct or instruct. Such meetings are used to give information and instruction to subordinates, clear up misunderstandings, and integrate ideas and views where appropriate.
- **Advisory meetings.** An advisory meeting is called to share information. Such meetings are used to seek advice about a problem, inform participants about ideas, and listen to their views.
- **Committee meetings.** A committee meeting gathers interest groups to decide on matters of common concern. Such meetings are characterized by a sense of authority, compromise, and the resolution of differences by voting.
- **Council meetings.** A council meeting is held by persons of equal status to contribute to a matter at hand. Such meetings are typified by group accountability, the resolution of differences through discussion, and consensual decisions.

“When I give a lecture, I accept that people look at their watches, but what I do not tolerate is when they look at it and raise it to their ear to find out if it stopped.”

—Marcel Achard

“He who knows most grieves most for wasted time.”

—Dante

“Success depends upon previous preparation, and without such preparation there is sure to be failure.”

—Confucius

“When the outcome of a meeting is to have another meeting, it has been a lousy meeting.”

—Herbert Hoover

“Time is the scarcest resource; and unless it is managed, nothing else can be managed.”

—Peter Drucker

- **Negotiations.** A negotiation also sees interest groups gather but decisions are through bargaining, not voting. Such meetings are differentiated by quid pro quo decisions from sides having different but overlapping aims, with each seeking to achieve the best possible terms for itself. ■

## FURTHER READING

John Adair. 1988. *Effective Time Management*. Pan Books.



## MANAGEMENT TECHNIQUES

Leadership is the process of working out the right things to do. Management is the process of doing things right.



# Crafting a Knowledge Management Results Framework

Managing for results requires a coherent framework for strategic planning, management, and communications based on continuous learning and accountability. Results frameworks improve management effectiveness by defining realistic expected results, monitoring progress toward their achievement, integrating lessons into decisions, and reporting on performance.



## BACKGROUND

On 4 May 2009, at the 42nd Annual Meeting of the Board of Governors of ADB, Haruhiko Kuroda—ADB President and concurrent Chairperson of ADB's Board of Directors—stressed the importance of knowledge to that organization:

*To be fully effective, we must also consciously and actively blend knowledge with financing. We will focus on developing, capturing, and sharing knowledge in all our work, ensuring that ADB serves an intermediary role for both financing and knowledge.*

## ENHANCING KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT UNDER ADB'S STRATEGY 2020

On 31 July 2009, President Kuroda then approved *Enhancing Knowledge Management under Strategy 2020: Plan of Action for 2009–2011*<sup>1</sup> to advance the knowledge management agenda under *Strategy 2020: The Long-Term Strategic Framework of the Asian Development Bank (2008–2020)*.<sup>2</sup> Four pillars support the plan of action: (i) sharpening the knowledge focus in ADB's operations—to add value at regional, country, and project levels, (ii) empowering the communities of

practice—to collaborate for knowledge generation and sharing, (iii) strengthening external knowledge partnerships—to align and leverage external knowledge, and (iv) further enhancing staff learning and skills development—to enhance opportunities for staff to learn. The four pillars are closely related: the set of actions/outputs that make up the first focuses on adding value to ADB's operations in its developing member countries; the other three sets deal with how that might be achieved.

ADB's plan of action for knowledge management connotes a pragmatic, step-by-step approach: the initial actions/outputs are for a 3-year time frame; in October 2009, measures for their implementation were incorporated into ADB's Work Program and Budget Framework (2010–2012); and progress is to be monitored and reviewed at the time of ADB's annual budget review by the Regional and Sustainable Development Department in ADB, in consultation with ADB's Budget, Personnel, and Management Systems Department and Strategy and Policy Department.

**“Bite off more than you can chew, then chew it.”**

— Ella Williams

<sup>1</sup> *Enhancing Knowledge Management under Strategy 2020: Plan of Action for 2009–2011* is reproduced in ADB. 2009. *Enhancing Knowledge Management Strategies*. Manila. Available: [www.adb.org/documents/information/knowledge-solutions/enhancing-knowledge-management-strategies.pdf](http://www.adb.org/documents/information/knowledge-solutions/enhancing-knowledge-management-strategies.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> Available: [www.adb.org/documents/policies/strategy2020/strategy2020.pdf](http://www.adb.org/documents/policies/strategy2020/strategy2020.pdf)

## CRAFTING A KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT RESULTS FRAMEWORK

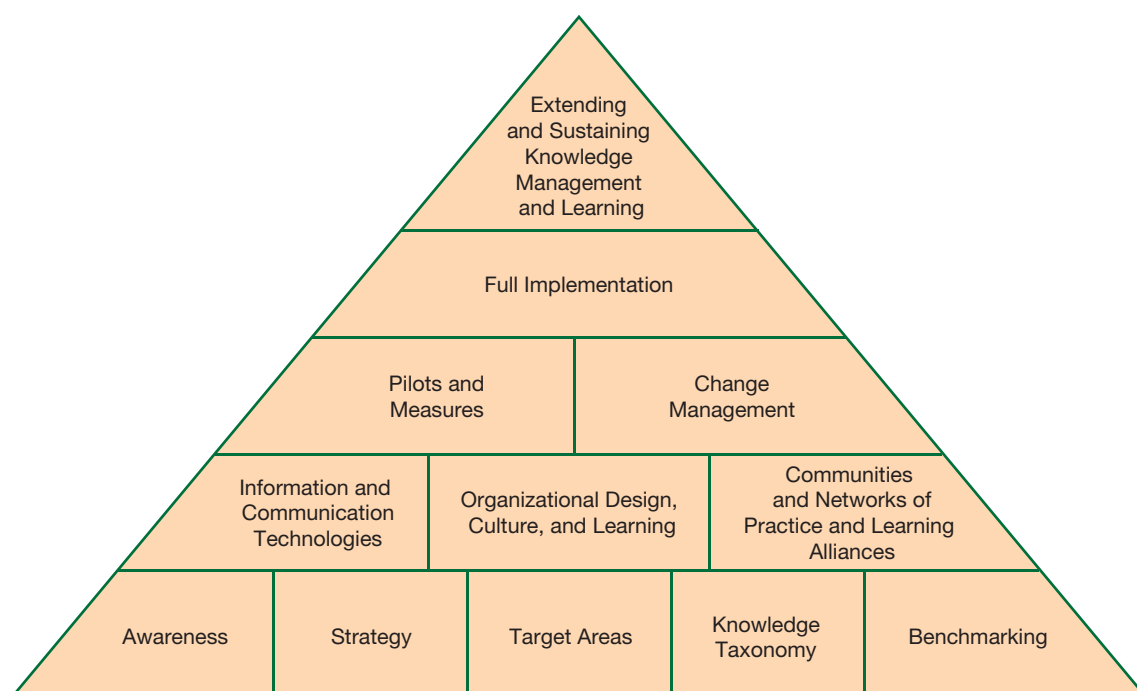
ADB's plan of action does not discuss but flags aspects that support and facilitate knowledge management practices, viz., budgetary allocations, business process improvements, and information technology. These *Knowledge Solutions* showcase

**“When it comes to getting things done, we need fewer architects and more bricklayers.”**

—Colleen Barrett

the expected outcomes, useful results indicators, specific activity indicators, targets, and sources of verification that comprise the knowledge management results framework for ADB's plan of action. The framework was prepared after extensive internal consultations. It is an important instrument with which to assess and improve performance and help identify problems and their solutions. It is the basis for reporting. (These *Knowledge Solutions* also disclose the approach to progress reporting and what will condition ratings of progress in adoption.) The framework is expected to promote a stronger culture of results and performance for knowledge management in ADB. ■

**Figure: Building a Knowledge-Centric Organization**



Source: Olivier Serrat. 2010. *Learning to Manage with Knowledge*. Manila: ADB. Available: [www.adb.org/documents/presentations/knowledge-management-and-learning/learning-to-manage-with-knowledge.pdf](http://www.adb.org/documents/presentations/knowledge-management-and-learning/learning-to-manage-with-knowledge.pdf)



## Box 1: Enhancing Knowledge Management under Strategy 2020: Plan of Action for 2009–2011<sup>a</sup>— Knowledge Management Results Framework

Impact: The capacity of ADB and its DMCs to reduce poverty is enhanced.

Outcome	Monitoring Indicator	Target <sup>b</sup>	Source of Verification
<b>First Pillar Statement: The Knowledge Focus in ADB's Operations is Sharpened</b>			
<b>Useful Results Indicators</b>			
	• Number of staff assessing the commitment and maturity of ADB's knowledge management framework favorably. Baseline year: 2008	10% more every year	• Annual Knowledge Management Survey. RSDD-KM
	• The number and outreach of ADB stand-alone flagship publications, facilitated by enhanced marketing and dissemination efforts. Baseline year: 2008	10% more every year	• DER
	• The number of references to ADB knowledge products in research, press, and policy reports. Baseline year: 2008	5% more every year	• DER
	• Views of web pages and downloads of PDF files from knowledge and operations departments. Baseline year: 2009	10% more every year	• DER
<b>Specific Activity Indicators</b>			
At the regional level, ADB is increasingly recognized as a lead policy advisor, notably through the knowledge agenda that its TA for research and development advances.	• An E-library hosting knowledge products that are indexed and searchable is launched.	Done: 2011	• DER
	• TA reports contain information on knowledge management and communication.	More, every year	• Special study by national consultant. RSDD-KM
	• Taxonomies, templates, and guidelines for branding and publishing, as well as use of metadata, are prepared or finalized, then disseminated through the knowledge management coordinators, for use by authors.	Done: 2010	• DER
	• A timetable for digitization of publications, e.g., books, significant papers, from 1966 is established and the process is launched, with care to add metadata to increase searchability, make intellectual patrimony more widely available, and enhance its intellectual equity.	Done: 2010	• DER
	• Channels for marketing and distribution of knowledge products are expanded, enhanced, and monitored to build additional relationships and help increase exposure among key stakeholders, opinion makers, and academic institutions.	More, every year	• DER
	• A world-class translation system is adopted and introduced with associated training to retool, upgrade, and expand current practices, with emphasis on flow management of journalistically written summaries that, where possible, coincide with book releases.	Done: 2011	• DER

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Box 1 continued

Impact: The capacity of ADB and its DMCs to reduce poverty is enhanced.			
Outcome	Monitoring Indicator	Target <sup>b</sup>	Source of Verification
<b>First Pillar Statement: The Knowledge Focus in ADB's Operations is Sharpened</b>			
At the country level, CPSs guide medium-term operational programming with a focus on results and development effectiveness.	<b>Useful Results Indicators</b>		
	Number of instances on record when CPSs led to DMC studies that were used to support policy development and decision making. Baseline year: 2010	1 more every year	Annual questionnaire to RMs. RSDD-KM
	<b>Specific Activity Indicators</b>		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>CPSs contain information on knowledge management and communication.</li> <li>CPSs state in which sector(s) ADB considers itself a key knowledge partner in the donor community.</li> <li>ADB assesses the strategic fit of the knowledge products and services extended by RMs and local demand for knowledge solutions.</li> </ul>	More, every year More, every year Done: 2010	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Special study by national consultant. RSDD-KM</li> <li>Special study by national consultant. RSDD-KM</li> <li>Questionnaire to RMs. RSDD-KM</li> </ul>
At the project or TA level, key documents embody quality, knowledge, and innovation.	<b>Useful Results Indicators</b>		
	Downloads of TA reports from internal and external users. Baseline year: 2009	More, every year	DER, ODs
	The number of TA consultant reports posted on ADB.org. Baseline year: 2009	More, every year	DER, ODs
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The number of books, reports, journals, briefs, working papers, training and instructive materials, and awareness-raising and multimedia materials posted on ADB.org. Baseline year: 2009</li> <li>The number of landing pages on ADB.org for ADB projects and studies. Baseline year: 2009</li> </ul>	More, every year More, every year	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>DER, ODs</li> <li>DER, ODs</li> </ul>
	<b>Specific Activity Indicators</b>		
	RRPs contain information on knowledge management and communication.	More, every year	Special study by national consultant. RSDD-KM
	TA reports contain information on knowledge management and communication.	More, every year	Offices and departments
	New sector peer review process implemented in ADB for the preparation of RRs and TAs.	Done: 2010	SPPI, RSDD

continued on next page



Box 1 continued

Impact: The capacity of ADB and its DMCs to reduce poverty is enhanced.			
Outcome	Monitoring Indicator	Target <sup>b</sup>	Source of Verification
<b>Second Pillar Statement: The Communities of Practice are Empowered</b>			
<b>Useful Results Indicators</b>			
CoPs become an integral part of ADB's business processes.	• CoPs are resourced with dedicated staff. Baseline year: 2009	Done: 2010–2011	• BPOD
	• The number of work plans and PDPs in which participation in CoPs is mentioned. Baseline year: 2009	More, every year	• BPHR
	• The number of meetings and events organized by CoPs. Baseline year: 2010	More, every year	• RSDD-KM, CoPs
	• The number of early informal peer reviews by CoP members, to help staff conceptualize projects and TA. Baseline year: 2010	More, every year	• Annual questionnaire to CoPs. RSDD-KM
<b>Specific Activity Indicators</b>			
CoPs become an integral part of ADB's business processes.	• The capacity of CoPs in terms of staff positions in direct support of their operational and administrative activities. Baseline year: 2009	Done: 2010–2011	• BPOD
	• CoPs conduct regular self-assessments of effectiveness, including assessments of the CoP convenor, as part of annual sector and thematic reports. Baseline year: 2010	All, every year	• CoPs
	• A <i>Forum on Learning and ADB's CoPs: Learning, Sharing, and Doing Together</i> is held.	Every year	• RSOD, RSDD-KM
	• Sector and thematic websites are revamped and updated with links to relevant information in ADB.	Done: 2010–2011	• RSDD-KM
	• Supervisors are instructed and ensure that institutional initiatives in CoPs are assessed in PDPs and included in work planning.	Every year, at the start	• BPHR
	• Revised <i>Guidelines for Sector and Thematic Reporting</i> are prepared and approved.	Done: 2009	• RSDD-KM, RSOD
<b>Useful Results Indicators</b>			
Output-based financing recognizes CoPs that generate and share useful and usable knowledge.	• The budgets of CoPs support expanding activities and are complemented through TAs.	Done: 2010	• BPBM, CoPs
	• Annual CoP work plans are based on triennial sector and thematic reports.	80% in 2010, 100% afterwards	• RSDD-KM
	<b>Specific Activity Indicators</b>		
Output-based financing recognizes CoPs that generate and share useful and usable knowledge.	• Budget allocations are devolved through relevant divisions to heads of CoPs responsible for managing funds.	Done: 2011	• BPBM, CoPs
	• A <i>CoP Accomplishment Report</i> is generated.	Every year, in September	• RSDD-KM

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Box 1 continued

Impact: The capacity of ADB and its DMICs to reduce poverty is enhanced.			
Outcome	Monitoring Indicator	Target <sup>b</sup>	Source of Verification
<b>Second Pillar Statement: The Communities of Practice are Empowered</b>			
<b>Useful Results Indicators</b>			
The CoPs engage more purposefully in external knowledge partnerships.	• The number of formal and informal knowledge partnerships with other organizations for knowledge generation and sharing. Baseline year: 2010	More, every year	• Annual questionnaire to CoPs. RSDD-KM
	• Knowledge networking and collaboration is recognized by ADB with mention of this in PDPs.	Done: 2010	• Offices and departments, BPHR
	<b>Specific Activity Indicators</b>		
	• CoPs engage in formal and informal knowledge partnerships that result in joint activities. Baseline year: 2010	More, every year	• Annual questionnaire to CoPs. RSDD-KM
<b>Useful Results Indicators</b>			
The contributions of the knowledge management coordinators in ADB are enhanced.	• The activities of the knowledge management coordinators are reviewed, harmonized, and managed for efficiency and effectiveness.	Done: 2010–2011	• RSDD-KM
	<b>Specific Activity Indicators</b>		
	• Meetings, facilitated by RSDD-KM, are held with the knowledge management coordinators to structure their contributions and to identify and discuss opportunities to ramp these up. Baseline year: 2010	Every quarter	• RSDD-KM, DER
	• Meetings, facilitated by DER, are held with the knowledge management coordinators to identify and discuss marketing and dissemination opportunities to enhance knowledge products and increase their outreach with emphasis on relevance, accuracy, objectivity, and timeliness. Baseline year: 2010	Every quarter	• DER, RSDD-KM
<b>Third Pillar Statement: External Knowledge Partnerships are Strengthened</b>			
<b>Useful Results Indicators</b>			
The design, implementation, and monitoring of external knowledge partnerships with global, regional, and national institutions is improved.	• The design, implementation, and monitoring of strategic partnerships in key sectors and themes is informed by the <i>Guidelines on Designing Knowledge Partnerships</i> to be finalized in 2010.	Done: 2010	• SPPI, RSDD-KM
	• A database of strategic partnerships affords greater transparency and synergies are achieved where institutions are involved in more than one strategic partnership arrangement with ADB.	Done: 2010	• SPPI, OIST, RSDD-KM
	<b>Specific Activity Indicators</b>		
	• A resource document, <i>Guidelines on Designing Knowledge Partnerships</i> , is drafted that informs the design, implementation, and monitoring of knowledge components in strategic partnerships.	Done: 2010	• RSDD-KM, SPPI
	• Midterm review processes for memorandums of understanding with strategic partners are adapted to include review of knowledge generation and sharing components.	Done: 2010	• SPPI, RSDD-KM
	• A database of strategic partnerships for use across ADB, including resident missions, is established and managed continuously thereafter.	Done: 2010	• SPPI, OIST, RSDD-KM

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Box 1 continued

<b>Impact: The capacity of ADB and its DMCs to reduce poverty is enhanced.</b>			
Outcome	Monitoring Indicator	Target <sup>b</sup>	Source of Verification
<b>Third Pillar Statement: External Knowledge Partnerships are Strengthened</b>			
<b>Useful Results Indicators</b>			
External knowledge partnerships generate and share knowledge proactively.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>External stakeholders perceiving ADB as a source of knowledge on development issues. Baseline year: 2006</li> </ul>	10% more	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ADB Stakeholder Perceptions Survey, 2009. DER</li> </ul>
	<b>Specific Activity Indicators</b>		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ADB.org offers improved information on knowledge partnerships and profiles their products and services.</li> <li>The dissemination and visibility of ADB's knowledge products are expanded and enhanced through ADB's depository library program and multi-donor public information center network.</li> </ul>	Done: 2010  More, every year	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>DER</li> <li>DER</li> </ul>
<b>Fourth Pillar Statement: Staff Learning and Skills Development are Enhanced Further</b>			
<b>Useful Results Indicators</b>			
Staff skills in knowledge management and learning are developed and captured.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Staff perceiving that ADB is becoming a learning organization that generates and shares knowledge better. Baseline year: 2008</li> </ul>	10% more every year	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Annual KM Survey. RSDD-KM</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Staff participation in learning and development activities for knowledge management and learning.</li> </ul>	More, every year	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>RSDD-KM, BPDB</li> </ul>
	<b>Specific Activity Indicators</b>		
Staff skills in knowledge management and learning are developed and captured.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A training needs assessment is conducted to identify the learning programs CoPs need and their preferred learning modes, and recommend learning opportunities to support their activities in 2010–2011.</li> </ul>	Done: 2010	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>RSDD-KM, BPDB</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>RSDD-KM and BPM/SD collaborate on the design and conduct of learning and development activities.</li> </ul>	Done: 2010–2011	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>RSDD-KM, BPDB</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>RSDD-KM holds awareness and capacity-building sessions on knowledge management and learning. Start in 2010</li> </ul>	Continuously, every year	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>RSDD-KM, BPDB</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The awareness, outreach, and impact of the <i>Knowledge Solutions and Knowledge Showcase</i> series is assessed in the baseline year and annually thereafter.</li> </ul>	Done: 2010	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>RSDD-KM</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Expanded staff profile pages are developed in 2010 and made available externally in 2011.</li> </ul>	Done: 2010	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>OIST<sup>c</sup></li> </ul>

continued on next page

Box 1 continued

Impact: The capacity of ADB and its DMCs to reduce poverty is enhanced.			
Outcome	Monitoring Indicator	Target <sup>b</sup>	Source of Verification
<b>Useful Results Indicators</b>			
Staff pursue external learning opportunities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The number of staff who express interest in external learning opportunities and apply for competitive sabbatical leave increases. Baseline year: 2007</li> </ul>	More, every year	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>BPDB</li> </ul>
	<b>Specific Activity Indicators</b>		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ADB encourages staff exchanges with strategic partners. Baseline year: 2007</li> <li>The budget for external training expands opportunities. Baseline year: 2007</li> </ul>	Done: 2010 Done: 2010	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>BPDB</li> <li>BPDB</li> </ul>
<b>Useful Results Indicators</b>			
Research in priority areas of <i>Strategy 2020</i> is boosted.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The number of senior researchers invited under the Eminent Speakers' Forum, Distinguished Speakers Program, and Distinguished Speaker Seminar Series. Baseline year: 2009</li> <li>Demand-driven studies are undertaken by senior and junior researchers. Baseline year: 2009</li> <li>Knowledge departments produce books, reports, journals, briefs, working papers, training and instructive materials, and awareness-raising and multimedia materials. Baseline year: 2009</li> </ul>	More, every year More, every year More, every year	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ADBI, ERD, RSDD-KM</li> <li>Knowledge Departments</li> <li>RSDD, Knowledge Departments</li> </ul>
	<b>Specific Activity Indicator</b>		
	Knowledge departments seize opportunities to research priority areas of <i>Strategy 2020</i> . Baseline year: 2009	One per department, every year	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>RSDD, Knowledge Departments</li> </ul>
<b>Useful Results Indicator</b>			
The tacit knowledge of departing staff is captured to drive organizational performance improvement.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ADB retains critical knowledge from departing staff through exit interview summaries.</li> </ul>	All departing staff, from 2010	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Offices and departments</li> </ul>
	<b>Specific Activity Indicator</b>		
	Exit interviews, initially for professional staff, are introduced in every department with assistance from RSDD-KM and mainstreamed from 2011.	Done: 2010	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>RSDD-KM, BPHR, offices and departments</li> </ul>

<sup>a</sup> *Enhancing Knowledge Management under Strategy 2020: Plan of Action for 2009–2011* is reproduced in ADB. 2009. *Enhancing Knowledge Management Strategies*. Manila. Available: [www.adb.org/documents/information/knowledge-solutions/enhancing-knowledge-management-strategies.pdf](http://www.adb.org/documents/information/knowledge-solutions/enhancing-knowledge-management-strategies.pdf)

<sup>b</sup> Baseline values are available in all instances. Their provision, and subsequent reporting on changes, is the responsibility of the source of verification identified.

<sup>c</sup> OIST will play supportive roles, as required, in actions toward several other results, including those mentioned herein.

Notes:

- The impact targeted is that indicated in *Knowledge Management in ADB*. Available: [www.adb.org/documents/policies/knowledge-management/knowledge-management.pdf](http://www.adb.org/documents/policies/knowledge-management/knowledge-management.pdf)
- The primary outcomes, listed in *Knowledge Management in ADB*, that the plan of action supports are (i) an improved management system; (ii) improved business processes and information technology solutions for knowledge capture, enrichment, storage, and retrieval; (iii) improved organizational culture for knowledge sharing; (iv) well-functioning communities of practice; and (v) expanded knowledge sharing, learning, and dissemination through external relations and networking.
- From 2010, the annual knowledge management survey will be augmented by an annual survey gauging staff perceptions of competencies to learn for change in ADB.
- The annual *Forum on Learning* is expected to focus on CoPs—yet cut across the other three pillars—and focus on what was learned in the preceding year in practical ways with measurable outcomes that leverage multipliers.



## Box 2: Enhancing Knowledge Management under Strategy 2020: Plan of Action for 2009–2011—Assumptions and Risks

Pillar Statement	Assumptions and Risks
First Pillar: The Knowledge Focus in ADB's Operations is Sharpened	(i) strong commitment by ADB's Senior Management Team; (ii) ADB values adjust in support of knowledge management and learning; (iii) close coordination among offices and departments; and (iv) availability of adequate resources.
Second Pillar: The Communities of Practice are Empowered	(i) strong commitment by ADB's Senior Management Team; (ii) availability of staff capabilities (experience, competencies, and technical and professional skills); (iii) staff attitudes (values and beliefs about innovation, commitment, and flexibility) adjust in support of knowledge management and learning; (iv) close coordination among offices and departments; and (v) availability of adequate resources.
Third Pillar: External Knowledge Partnerships are Strengthened	(i) strong commitment by ADB's Senior Management Team; (ii) close coordination among offices and departments; and (iii) availability of adequate resources.
Fourth Pillar: Staff Learning and Skills Development are Enhanced Further	(i) strong commitment by ADB's Senior Management Team; (ii) staff attitudes (values and beliefs about innovation, commitment, and flexibility) adjust in support of knowledge management and learning; (iii) staff behaviors (performance, productivity, teamwork, and cooperation) adjust in support of knowledge management and learning; and (iv) availability of adequate resources.

## Box 3: Enhancing Knowledge Management under Strategy 2020: Plan of Action for 2009–2011—Progress Reports

Outcome	Target	Specific Activity Indicator	Rating of Progress in Adoption	RSDD Validation

### Notes:

- Progress reports on *Enhancing Knowledge Management under Strategy 2020: Plan of Action for 2009–2011* will be drafted in 2010 and 2011.
- The following four ratings will present quantitative and qualitative assessments on action: (i) fully adopted; (ii) largely adopted; (iii) partly adopted; and (iv) not adopted.

### Legend:

ADBI = Asian Development Bank Institute; BPBM = Budget and Management Services Division, BPMISD; BPDB = Staff Development and Benefits Division, BPMISD; BPHR = Human Resources Division, BPMISD; BPOD = Office of the Director General, BPMISD; BPMISD = Budget, Personnel, and Management Systems Department; CoP = community of practice; CPS = country partnership strategy; DER = Department of External Relations; DMC = developing member country; ERD = Economics and Research Department; OD = operations department; OIST = Office of Information Systems and Technology; PDF = portable document format; PDP = performance and development plan; RM = resident mission; RRP = report and recommendation of the President; RSDD = Regional and Sustainable Development Department; RSDD-KM = Knowledge Management Center, RSDD; RSOD = Office of the Director General, RSDD; SPD = Strategy and Policy Department; SPPI = Strategy, Policy, and Interagency Relations Division, SPD; TA = technical assistance.



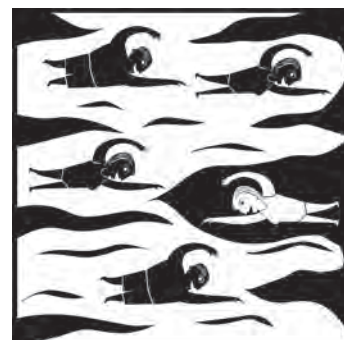
## MANAGEMENT TECHNIQUES

Leadership is the process of working out the right things to do. Management is the process of doing things right.



# Fast and Effective Change Management\*

When embarking on a change initiative, one should rapidly implement change that results in the higher levels of performance that were envisioned when the decision to make the changes was made. To make this happen, organizations must first overcome the resistance to change and then secure as much discretionary effort as possible.



## INTRODUCTION

John Kotter remains one of the most respected experts on the subject of change management. He began writing about change management back in the mid-1990s, when he first declared that only one change initiative in three actually achieved its stated objectives.

After more than a decade of research by academics and practitioners, one would think that we are now doing a much better job of managing change. Actually, that does not seem to be the case. In 2008, McKinsey & Company conducted a global survey of change management and found just about the same results as Kotter had 12 years before—only a third of change management attempts are successful. What are we doing wrong?

## WHY WE RESIST CHANGE

To be honest, many organizations do not make much of an effort to manage change. They simply announce what the changes will be and expect everyone to comply. There are two problems with this approach. First, the change sponsors have apparently failed to consider that we are creatures of habit, are generally satisfied with the status quo, and will tend to initially resist change. The second problem has to do with the fact that mere compliance behaviors do not make change initiatives successful—a large measure of discretionary effort is required.

There is initial resistance to organizational change for at least three reasons. First, people have had negative experiences as a result of previous organizational change efforts. However,

this is not to suggest that most people have had generally bad experiences with the entire organizational change process; we are specifically referring to the “transition” part of change. In the change process, you do not just go from the old to the new—from the status quo to a new, better alternative. The transition period spans the time from when people first learn about the proposed changes to the time they are successfully implemented. It is within this transition period that change makers (those being asked to change) experience discomfort.

Implementing organizational change initiatives invariably involves people changing themselves. The change you want to make cannot happen until people decide to change. William Bridges expressed this point quite well in his book, *Managing Transitions: Making the Most of Change*,<sup>1</sup> where he suggested that the transition, not the change, matters. Change is not the same as transition. Change is situational because of the new technology, the new boss, the new team roles, the new policy, etc. Transition is the psychological process people go through to come to terms with the new situation. Unless transition takes place, the planned change will simply not work.

**“ Leaders establish the vision for the future and set the strategy for getting there; they cause change. They motivate and inspire others to go in the right direction and they, along with everyone else, sacrifice to get there. ”**

—John Kotter

\* Philip Ash wrote these *Knowledge Solutions*.

<sup>1</sup> William Bridges. 1991. *Managing Transitions: Making the Most of Change*. Addison-Wesley Publishing.





Some discomfort is inevitable, but organizations generally fail to minimize the negative consequences of transition. Workers fear they cannot conform and succeed in the post-change work environment. They are often confused about why organizations make the change, exactly what the scope of the change is, and how their jobs will be impacted. Most organizations do little to allay such fears and concerns. If they did, implementing organizational change can be much faster and done more effectively.

A second reason for the pain during the transition period is the “mourning” change makers feel from the “death” of their work status quo. To help change makers accept the need for change, change managers attempt to portray the status quo as unacceptable, undesirable, and no longer viable. In other words, the status quo must be “killed” so that we can progress with making changes and creating a better future.

Resistance to change is not often strongly expressed when the proposed changes are initially unveiled because there is widespread denial that they will be pushed through. Not long after denial (when people realize that change is inevitable) a period of depression will typically follow. Depression is the critical period which must be made as brief as possible to allow change makers to at least conditionally accept the changes and begin testing new behaviors.

In a sense, change managers need to “kill” the status quo in the minds of personnel before they can move on to the new vision the organization has for the future. However, we must understand that many staff members have a stake in the status quo. One of the best pieces of research that helps us understand what workers experience psychologically during the transition period is *On Death and Dying*<sup>2</sup> by Elizabeth Kubler-Ross. Psychologically speaking, many workers mourn the loss of the status quo much as if they would mourn the loss of a person. Several change researchers support Kubler-Ross’ proposition that mourners (be they mourning the death of a person or the loss of the status quo at work) pass through five stages: denial and isolation, anger, bargaining, depression, trial, and acceptance. The depression phase is obviously painful, and often protracted.

The third reason many people initially resist change is the uncertainty created by the announcement of impending change. Daryl Conner described change as the disruption of expectations.<sup>3</sup> He proposed that people resist change because it disrupts the certainty and order of their work lives. Combining these three sources, it is easy to understand why many change makers will initially resist change no matter how badly needed the changes may be.

## STRATEGIES FOR OVERCOMING RESISTANCE

Our own experience confirms the truth about the importance of “unfreezing” the status quo. One “unfreezing” strategy is

to portray the proposed changes as a much better alternative than maintaining the status quo. However, while explaining the benefits of planned changes is important, this will almost certainly not be sufficient to “unfreeze” the status quo.

To make change fast and effective, you need to convince change makers that the status quo is no longer acceptable and that change is unavoidable. A classic metaphor for the “unfreezing” process is the “burning platform.” An oil platform caught fire in the North Sea trapping hundreds of workers between a blazing fire and the icy cold water below. Even though managers ordered workers to stay on the platform and wait for a rescue party, a few workers disobeyed and jumped more than a hundred feet into the freezing water that contained patches of blazing oil and debris. As it turned out, the only workers to survive the ordeal were those who jumped into the water. Once on shore, one survivor was asked how he found the courage to make that terrible jump. His response was, “My God man, I was standing on a burning platform—I had no choice but to jump.” One way to get change makers to abandon the status quo is to create a burning platform for change. In other words, make it easy to let go of the status quo by making it impossible to maintain.

**“Faced with the choice between changing one’s mind and proving that there is no need to do so, almost everyone gets busy on the proof.”**

—John Kenneth Galbraith

## GETTING PAST THE VALLEY OF DESPAIR

As noted earlier, people do not strongly express resistance when the proposed changes are initially unveiled because there is widespread denial that the changes will be pushed through. But you will remember from the Kubler-Ross model that depression typically follows denial, anger, and bargaining. Depression is the critical period that must be made as brief as possible to allow the targets of change to at least conditionally accept the changes and begin testing new behaviors.

**“After you’ve done a thing the same way for two years, look it over carefully. After five years, look at it with suspicion. And after ten years, throw it away and start all over.”**

—Alfred Edward Perlman

During the denial period, any thoughts that the organization might abandon the proposed changes should not be reinforced. In a sense, we need to “kill” the status quo in the minds of

<sup>2</sup> Elizabeth Kubler-Ross. 1973. *On Death and Dying*. Routledge Publishing.

<sup>3</sup> Daryl Conner. 1993. *Managing at the Speed of Change*. Random House Publishing.

personnel before they can move on to the new vision the organization has for the future. However, we must understand that many staff members have a stake in the status quo.

During the anger period, we should remain as unemotional and rational as possible. Displays of compassion and understanding are appropriate; portraying the positive aspects of organizational life that one can expect once the change initiatives are completed is also important. Allow for some venting of frustration, but reinforce the absolute necessity for change.

The bargaining phase is a good time to express some flexibility in the details of implementation and invite change makers to participate in refining implementation plans. While expressing some willingness to adjust the change initiatives through participation, maintain your commitment to reject the status quo in favor of the change initiatives.

Often, the depression phase is the most difficult for change managers. During this phase, change makers need to have their “space” to “mourn the death” of the status quo; but this is characteristically a period of lowered productivity that is not good for anyone. One of the keys to moving change makers through this period quickly is to encourage discussions between change makers who have moved on to trial and acceptance and those who remain in the depression stage. Change agents can also play an important role in carefully prodding change makers into the trial phase from being in depression.

In both the depression and trial stages, you should look carefully for examples of “trial behaviors.” Once spotted, you should positively reinforce these to produce more of the same type of behaviors. While you need to show compassion during depression, do not employ positive reinforcement since you will just be prolonging the length of time in the “valley of despair.” The key to both the trial and acceptance phases is lots of positive reinforcement for appropriate behaviors.

It is necessary to recognize and accept the fact that little progress will be made toward implementing change, so long as change makers have not yet made it past the depression stage. Their effectiveness in the status quo environment will also deteriorate. Therefore, it is critical to focus on getting the change makers on to trial and acceptance as quickly as possible. It is also important to not get “ahead of the game” by focusing on other change management issues when large numbers of people are not yet ready for acceptance. You must finish the “unfreezing” job and move change makers through the depression stage before real change can happen.

### THE 3 CS COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

The 3 Cs communication strategy is the primary communication-planning tool used to address resistance to change. The three Cs stand for the types of change issues that communication strategies should address:

- **Context**—Why make these changes? What is happening with our customers, competitors, stakeholders, and the like, that make these changes so important for us?

- **Content**—What exactly is it that we are changing? What are the scope, nature, and timing of the planned change initiatives?
- **Consequences**—What is in it for me personally, if I demonstrate defiance, compliance, or alliance with the proposed change initiatives?

The mistake that most companies make is simply announcing the content of the proposed change initiatives and soon thereafter treating any employee who does not exhibit a “positive, can do” attitude as disloyal. This ignores the psychological reality of change. We have seen companies making 80% of their communication effort on the content of change, and 10% each on context and consequences. Actually, we recommend about 20% on content issues and 40% each on context and consequences.

### DISCRETIONARY EFFORT, NOT COMPLIANCE

Performers can adopt one of three positions relative to proposed changes:

- **Defiance**—They adopt dysfunctional behaviors that are detrimental to the changes we want to occur.
- **Compliance**—Performers do not directly oppose the changes, neither do they exhibit much, if any, discretionary effort. Often, compliant performers will declare support for proposed changes but will not match their words with effort. What they say is not what they do.
- **Alliance**—Performers not only support the proposed changes with their words but they also exhibit strong discretionary efforts and their actions match their words.

The amount of discretionary effort is the difference between the least amount of effort required to just conform to a change request and the maximum possible effort. Behavioral research in workplace environments estimates that maximum discretionary effort can produce 100% greater results. Therefore, an important objective of a performance management program is to maximize discretionary effort.

Typically, few people are consistently defiant when confronted by change requests. The much more challenging problem is compliance. For one thing, it is hard to detect. Lack of discretionary effort is just one explanation among many for sub-par performance. It could be lack of training, poor coaching, lack of cooperation and support from others, etc. And so it is difficult to conclude with certainty that someone or a group is making little or no discretionary effort.

Ways to deal with lack of discretionary effort include communication, training, and consequences. A communication problem might exist if we have not thoroughly explained what behaviors we desire. Another explanation for the lack of discretionary effort is lack of competency. In other words, employees are not performing well because they simply are not able to. Perhaps training is needed to develop new competencies or strengthen existing ones. If we can be sure that performers know what is expected of them and they have the ability to perform, then we can reasonably conclude that applied behavior





analysis principles can be used to improve discretionary effort and performance.

## FAST AND EFFECTIVE CHANGE MANAGEMENT

Slowly obtaining acceptance is not a reasonable objective for change management. At best, this approach will disrupt current operations and result in the same or lower levels of performance stemming from compliant behaviors only.

When thinking about a change initiative, one should seek to rapidly implement change that results in the higher levels of performance that were envisioned when the decision to make the changes was made. Key to making this happen is to first overcome the resistance to change and then secure as much discretionary effort as possible.

Most change initiatives are developed to improve performance. Yet, too often, the original objectives pertaining to better performance, improved quality, enhanced customer satisfaction, or whatever dimension of improvement was envisioned seem to be forgotten. Once the decision to introduce change is made, the attention of the sponsors of change tend to shift from the reasons for making the change and the promise of better performance to making sure the targets of change understand what the requested changes are and will comply. In reality, change management and performance management

should be viewed as flip sides of the same coin. After all, why change if not to improve performance? Change for the sake of change makes little sense. Change managers should focus first on unfreezing the status quo and reinforcing trial behaviors as soon as they occur, then focus on driving performance higher by improving discretionary effort. That is fast and effective change management! ■

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# The Five Whys Technique

When confronted with a problem, have you ever stopped and asked “why” five times? If you do not ask the right question, you will not get the right answer. The Five Whys is a simple question-asking technique that explores the cause-and-effect relationships underlying problems.



## RATIONALE

For every effect there is a cause. But the results chain between the two is fairly long and becomes finer as one moves from inputs to activities, outputs, outcome, and impact.<sup>1</sup> In results-based management,<sup>2</sup> the degree of control one enjoys decreases higher up the chain and the challenge of monitoring and evaluating correspondingly increases.

In due course, when a problem appears, the temptation is strong to blame others or external events. Yet, the root cause of problems often lies closer to home.

## THE FIVE WHYS TECHNIQUE

When looking to solve a problem, it helps to begin at the end result, reflect on what caused that, and question the answer five times.<sup>3</sup> This elementary and often effective approach to problem solving promotes deep thinking through questioning, and can be adapted quickly and applied to most problems.<sup>4</sup> Most obviously and directly, the Five Whys technique relates

to the principle of systematic problem solving: without the intent of the principle, the technique can only be a shell of the process. Hence, there are three key elements to effective use of the Five Whys technique: (i) accurate and complete statements of problems,<sup>5</sup> (ii) complete honesty in answering the questions, (iii) the determination to get to the bottom of problems and resolve them. The technique was developed by Sakichi Toyoda for the Toyota Industries Corporation.

“ For Want of a Nail  
For want of a nail the shoe is lost;  
For want of a shoe the horse is lost;  
For want of a horse the rider is lost;  
For want of a rider the battle is lost;  
For want of a battle the kingdom is lost;  
And all for the want of a horseshoe nail. ”

—George Herbert

<sup>1</sup> Inputs, activities, and outputs are within the direct control of an intervention's management. An outcome is what an intervention can be expected to achieve and be accountable for. An impact is what an intervention is expected to contribute to.

<sup>2</sup> Results-based management is a life-cycle management philosophy and approach that emphasizes results in integrated planning, implementing, monitoring, reporting, learning, and changing. Demonstrating results is important for credibility, accountability, and continuous learning, and to informed decision making and resource allocation.

<sup>3</sup> Five is a good rule of thumb. By asking “why” five times, one can usually peel away the layers of symptoms that hide the cause of a problem. But one may also find one needs to ask “why” fewer times, or conversely more.

<sup>4</sup> Root cause analysis is the generic name of problem-solving techniques. The basic elements of root causes are materials, equipment, the man-made or natural environment, information, measurement, methods and procedures, people, management, and management systems. Other tools can be used if the Five Whys technique does not intuitively direct attention to one of these. They include barrier analysis, change analysis, causal factor tree analysis, and the Ishikawa (or fishbone) diagram.

<sup>5</sup> By repeating “why” five times, the nature of the problem, as well as, its solution becomes clear.

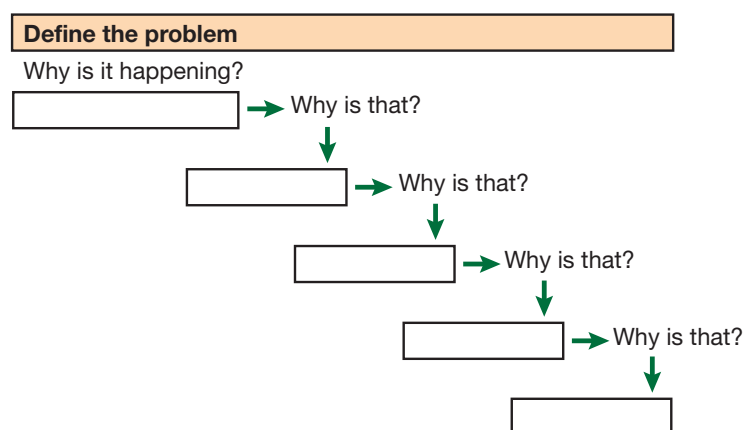


## PROCESS

The Five Whys exercise is vastly improved when applied by a team, and there are five basic steps to conducting it:

- Gather a team and develop the problem statement in agreement. After this is done, decide whether or not additional individuals are needed to resolve the problem.
  - Ask the first “why” of the team: why is this or that problem taking place? There will probably be three or four sensible answers: record them all on a flip chart or whiteboard, or use index cards taped to a wall.
  - Ask four more successive “whys,” repeating the process for every statement on the flip chart, whiteboard, or index cards. Post each answer near its “parent.” Follow up on all plausible answers. You will have identified the root cause
- when asking “why” yields no further useful information. (If necessary, continue to ask questions beyond the arbitrary five layers to get to the root cause.)
  - Among the dozen or so answers to the last asked “why” look for systemic causes of the problem. Discuss these and settle on the most likely systemic cause. Follow the team session with a debriefing and show the product to others to confirm that they see logic in the analysis.
  - After settling on the most probable root cause of the problem and obtaining confirmation of the logic behind the analysis, develop appropriate corrective actions to remove the root cause from the system. The actions can (as the case demands) be undertaken by others but planning and implementation will benefit from team inputs.

**Figure: Five Whys Worksheet**



Source: Author.

## CAVEAT

The Five Whys technique has been criticized as too basic a tool to analyze root causes to the depth required to ensure that the causes are fixed. The reasons for this criticism include

- the tendency of investigators to stop at symptoms, and not proceed to lower-level root causes;
  - the inability of investigators to cast their minds beyond current information and knowledge;
  - lack of facilitation and support to help investigators ask the right questions;
- the low repeat rate of results: different teams using the Five Whys technique have been known to come up with different causes for the same problem.

Clearly, the Five Whys technique will suffer if it is applied through deduction only. The process articulated earlier encourages on-the-spot verification of answers to the current “why” question before proceeding to the next, and should help avoid such issues. ■

### Jeff Bezos and Root Cause Analysis

*[The author explains how, while he worked for Amazon.com in 2004, Jeff Bezos did something that the author still carries with him to this day. During a visit to the Amazon.com Fulfillment Centers, Jeff Bezos learned of a safety incident during which an associate had damaged his finger. He walked to the whiteboard and began to use the Five Whys technique.]*

Why did the associate damage his thumb?

Because his thumb got caught in the conveyor.

Why did his thumb get caught in the conveyor?

Because he was chasing his bag, which was on a running conveyor.

Why did he chase his bag?

Because he had placed his bag on the conveyor, which had then started unexpectedly.

Why was his bag on the conveyor?

Because he was using the conveyor as a table.

And so, the root cause of the associate's damaged thumb is that he simply needed a table. There wasn't one around and he had used the conveyor as a table. To eliminate further safety incidences, Amazon.com needs to provide tables at the appropriate stations and update safety training. It must also look into preventative maintenance standard work.

Source: Adapted from Shmula. 2008. Available: [www.shmula.com/987/jeff-bezos-5-why-exercise-root-cause-analysis-cause-and-effect-ishikawa-lean-thinking-six-sigma](http://www.shmula.com/987/jeff-bezos-5-why-exercise-root-cause-analysis-cause-and-effect-ishikawa-lean-thinking-six-sigma)

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#### MANAGEMENT TECHNIQUES

Leadership is the process of working out the right things to do. Management is the process of doing things right.

# Focusing on Project Metrics

The need to ensure that scarce funding is applied to effective projects is a goal shared by all. Focusing on common parameters of project performance is a means to that end.



Six parameters are always given weight in methodologies for project management. They are

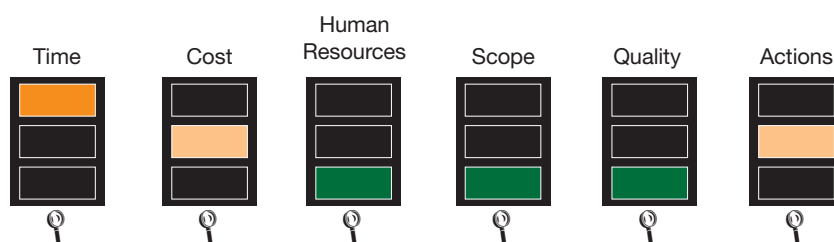
- Time
- Cost
- Human Resources
- Scope
- Quality
- Actions

By gauging performance against these parameters, an image of the parts of a project that are in order and of those that are not can be formed. Is the activity on schedule? Is the activity within budget? How many human resources are being expended? Is the activity's scope in line with original

expectations? Is project personnel analyzing and fixing problems with quality actions? Are actions outstanding? If all lights are green, performance will be highly satisfactory in all areas. If one or more are orange, the activity will have one or more potential problems. A red light will signal a parameter that requires urgent attention.

Based on project documents, such as the design and monitoring framework, indicative activities schedule, and cost tables, as well as participatory mechanisms, review missions can assess the attainment of (usually quantified) benchmarks for each parameter by means of project metrics using the activity dashboard depicted below. ■

**Figure: Activity Dashboard**



Source: Author.





# Growing Managers, Not Bosses

In the 21st century, managers are responsible for the application and performance of knowledge at task, team, and individual levels. Their accountability is absolute and cannot be relinquished. In a changing world, successful organizations spend more time, integrity, and brainpower on selecting them than on anything else.



## IMAGINE

Your organization has the right strategy. It also has the right structure (since that follows strategy). Are you happy? Not yet. You do not have enough of the right stuff.

## THE RIGHT STUFF

The right stuff are inspiring, caring, infusing, and initiating managers who go about their business quietly, on the word of Henry Mintzberg. Warren Bennis, always keen on leaders, sees them as white knights who can somehow herd cats. Most people would be happy with either variety. Indeed, they would be happy with any of the prototypical characters drawn in management textbooks. But the fact is that such high-caliber material is not available for nearly all organizations.

So it is important to make the most of what organizations do have and to spend, therefore, more time, integrity, and brainpower on making people decisions than on anything else. There are good reasons for this: experience shows that one in three promotions ends in failure, that one in three is just about effective, and that one in three comes to pass right. The quality of promotion and staffing decisions reveals the values and standards of management and whether it takes its duties seriously.

## MANAGERIAL RESPONSIBILITY

To whom do these decisions relate? Let us look at what is required. In the 21st century, managers are responsible for the application and performance of knowledge at task, team,

and individual levels. This accountability is absolute and cannot be relinquished. Once upon a time, the standard duties of managers were to set objectives, organize, communicate, energize, measure accomplishments, and develop people. Excepting the smallest organizations, they must now also know how to integrate worldwide phenomena into strategic decisions, take greater risks more often over longer periods, visualize their organization as a whole and blend their function within it, manage by objectives, inspire and motivate knowledge workers, build cohesive teams, and communicate information rapidly and succinctly. Some necessary generic attributes are enthusiasm, integrity, toughness, fairness, humanity, humility, and confidence. Without a doubt, management and its requirements are more complex and there is no room for safe mediocrity.

## MANAGER DEVELOPMENT

It follows, then, that managers must be groomed and developed for strategic, operational, and team leadership. (The long-standing, false dichotomy between managers and leaders is on its last legs: management is a role, leadership an attribute.) As luck would have it, however, the art of manager development is in its infancy. Mistaken beliefs abound: manager development is not about attending courses; it is not about finding potential; it is not about promotion or replacement planning; and it is definitely not a means to change personality. Its sole purpose is to make a person effective. For this reason, manager development must deal with the structure of management relations, with tasks, with the management skills that a person needs, and with the changes in behavior that are likely to sharpen existing skills and make them more operative. In sum, if managers are to be grown, the elements of identity that should be cultivated relate to quality (what a manager has to be), function (what a manager has to do), and situation (what a manager has to know).

“Ninety percent of what we call “management” consists of making it difficult for people to get things done.”

—Peter Drucker



## GROWING MANAGERS

Human resource management needs to change. Too often, what passes for management of human resources has little to do with human resources and even less with management. Detractors say that most human resource divisions would be hard-pressed to prove that they are making a real difference. As a minimum, it should be recognized that the majority of people want to work productively and that managing them is the responsibility of their manager, not that of a human resource specialist. But there are vital roles that are best carried out by human resource divisions. One of them is growing managers, not bosses. There are implications for training, selection, coaching and mentoring, giving people who merit it the chance to manage, education for management and leadership, and strategies for manager development.

## AFTERWORD

These days, people do not so readily accept as manager someone whose credentials they do not admire. If persons are promoted because they are politicians, others will deride management for forcing them to become politicians, too. They will stop performing or they will quit. This should matter very much. When rewards and perquisites go to mere cleverness, obsequiousness, or nonperformance, an organization declines in tune with these attributes. ■

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# Managing by Walking Around

Management by walking around emphasizes the importance of interpersonal contact, open appreciation, and recognition. It is one of the most important ways to build civility and performance in the workplace.



## BACKGROUND

The hallmarks of the modern organization are satellite offices, remote offices, home offices, virtual offices, hotelling facilities, and the electronic mail that underpins—and promotes—these. Today, knowledge workers receive few telephone calls, and electronic mail is their communication vehicle of choice. (The use of videoconferencing is growing, too.) After all, why should they walk around if they can type, point, and click? At the receiving end, managers are known to collect more than 150 messages each day. Yet, as knowledge workers on the rise tote up electronic status, they also distance themselves from colleagues.

Managing by walking around was popularized by Tom Peters<sup>1</sup> and Robert Waterman in the early 1980s because it was (already then) felt that managers were becoming isolated from their subordinates. At Hewlett-Packard, where the approach was practiced from 1973, executives were encouraged to know their people, understand their work, and make themselves more visible and accessible. Bill Hewlett and Dave Packard's business philosophy, centered on deep respect for people and acknowledgment of their built-in desire to do a good job, had evolved into informal, decentralized management and relaxed, collegial communication styles. Theirs was the opposite of drive-by management.

“If you wait for people to come to you, you'll only get small problems. You must go and find them. The big problems are where people don't realize they have one in the first place.”

—W. Edwards Deming

## RATIONALE

The basic principle is that command-and-control is ineffective in modern organizations. Nothing is more instructive than seeing what actually transpires in the real world and learning from that. Management by walking around is a leadership technique that has stood the test of time and can be used by any manager. Except for virtual organizations<sup>2</sup>—and most of us still do not work through these even if we interface variously with them—face-to-face interaction remains a sure way to receive and give feedback wherever managers see staff regularly. Why? Because it is staff, not managers, who create an organization's products and deliver its services, and appreciation of that can

“A desk is a dangerous place from which to view the world.”

—John le Carré

<sup>1</sup> Peters saw managing by wandering around as the basis of leadership and excellence and called it the technology of the obvious.

<sup>2</sup> Virtual organizations are organized entities, whether corporate or charitable, that do not exist in any one central location but instead exist solely through the internet. There are social, psychological, ethical, and technical implications to the nature and rise of these, better discussed elsewhere.



only come from knowing what happens on the ground. Because people live to be part of something, and being intimately in touch opens up more lines of informal communication<sup>3</sup> and produces stronger team dynamics and performance. The human touch still works best.

### APPROACH

Managing by walking around requires personal involvement, good listening skills, and the recognition that most people in an organization want to contribute to its success. It should not be forced and cannot be a charade. It works if you display sincerity and civility and are genuinely interested in staff and their work. Try to

1. Wander about as often as you can, but recurrently and preferably daily.
2. Relax as you make your rounds.
3. Share and invite good news.
4. Talk about family, hobbies, vacations, and sports.
5. Watch and listen without judgment.
6. Invite ideas and opinions to improve operations, products, services, etc.
7. Be responsive to problems and concerns.
8. Look out for staff doing something right, and give them public recognition.

9. Project the image of a coach and mentor, not that an inspector.
10. Give people on-the-spot help.
11. Use the opportunity to transmit the organization's values.
12. Swap value and legacy stories.
13. Share your dreams.
14. Have fun.

### BENEFITS

Managing by walking around does not just cut through vertical lines of communication. It also

1. Builds trust and relationships.
2. Motivates staff by suggesting that management takes an active interest in people.
3. Encourages staff to achieve individual and collective goals.
4. Strengthens ability to drive cultural change for higher organizational performance.
5. Refreshes organizational values.
6. Makes work less formal.
7. Creates a healthy organization. ■

### FURTHER READING

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<sup>3</sup> In high-performance organizations, the intensity of communications is unmistakable. It usually starts with an insistence on informality.





# Managing Knowledge Workers

A knowledge worker is someone who is employed because of his or her knowledge of a subject matter, rather than ability to perform manual labor. They perform best when empowered to make the most of their deepest skills.



## RATIONALE

Assumptions about people working in organizations are less and less tenable. One misleading notion is that they are subordinate employees retained around the clock; another is that they rely on their organization for livelihood and career. One hundred years ago, in the United States and Europe, the largest single group of workers labored in agriculture. Sixty years later, it consisted of technical, professional, and managerial people. Today, it is made up of knowledge workers who may practice at an organization but might not be its employees. And, if they are in full-time employment, fewer and fewer are subordinates.

What of it? Observers make out that working habits are shifting from lifetime employment in a single organization to portfolio work. Knowledge workers produce and distribute ideas and information rather than goods or services. They are individuals with different aspirations from the hierarchy-conscious personnel of the past; they are also mobile and they do leave. Hiring talented people is difficult. Keeping them is more difficult still. So, to plug the drain of intellectual capital in a competitive knowledge economy, knowledge workers should be treated as an asset rather than as a cost. Preferably, they should be managed as though they were partners (or at least volunteers).

## MANAGING TALENT

Making knowledgeable people perform is not a matter of making them work harder or more skillfully. Naturally, they are dedicated and such interventions are beside the point. Rather, the managerial task relates to removing obstacles to performance and then channeling efforts into areas that will contribute to the accomplishment of an organization's objective. For that reason, managing talented workers for performance is best understood as a process of influence. To

begin, establish a framework in terms of culture, structure, and style of management in which the talent of knowledge workers can flourish. In exercising this process, accommodate these people's preferred ways of working. The result is that knowledge workers understand, identify with, and see how their own contribution can be enhanced. They put their best abilities to the test. They challenge and achieve. To build such a framework,

- Recognize outstanding talent wherever it is found.
- Establish clear task objectives and performance standards in consultation with each knowledge worker.
- Extend incentives, rewards, and reinforcements that meet the motivational patterns of each knowledge worker.
- Provide opportunities for improvement.

As organizations redesign in the knowledge economy, they will have to quickly address the elemental issue of motivation. Consider the major rewards typically provided to workers for effort (irrespective of the type of worker). Wages, for instance, cannot be consumed at work. Fringe benefits (such as leave, health and medical insurance, pay for overtime, or proceeds from stock purchase plans) yield satisfaction only when workers leave the organization. And, sadly, promotion often means little more than a bigger office, a resounding title, or a special parking place. Is it surprising then that so many workers perceive their job to be a form of punishment? The field of motivation is still wide open: but the organizations that thrive will have (more appetizing) menus of benefit options from which knowledge workers can choose.

## ...WITH KNOWLEDGE MANAGERS

Certainly, knowledge workers require knowledge managers, not bosses. These new-era managers need to set and enforce on themselves exacting standards for their performance of those functions that determine ability to perform. Time and again,



traditional managers exercise no leadership at all but only position power. Many reach the top by being tough and self-affirmative or by being the kind of person that others feel safe in following or promoting. Yet managing knowledge workers requires that managers themselves act as good follower and team player as well as leader and technologist. Since the process of influencing the performance of knowledge workers is mainly developmental, they need also to hone skills in appraising,

coaching, mentoring, and providing feedback. One measure of their effectiveness will be by the quality of the (internal and external) relationships that they create.

The knowledge economy is pruning status, power, and upward mobility from the managerial role. From now on, would-be new-era managers will be asked to reply convincingly to a simple question: Why should a knowledge worker want to be managed by you? ■

**MANAGEMENT TECHNIQUES**

Leadership is the process of working out the right things to do. Management is the process of doing things right.

# New-Age Branding and the Public Sector

Branding is a means to identify a company's products or services, differentiate them from those of others, and create and maintain an image that encourages confidence among clients, audiences, and partners. Until the mid-1990s, brand management—based on the 4Ps of product (or service), place, price, and promotion—aimed to engineer additional value from single brands. The idea of organizational branding has since developed, with implications for behavior and behavioral change, and is making inroads into the public sector, too.



## BACKGROUND

The core concept in marketing<sup>1</sup> has always been that of transaction, whereby an exchange of values takes place. However, in parallel with changes in cultures, lifestyles, and technologies, the emphasis in marketing has shifted from individual transactions: the new focus is on establishing long-term relationships.

Marketing and branding are inextricably linked. To meet demand and facilitate transaction, the objectives that a good brand achieves are to deliver the message clearly, confirm credibility, connect emotionally to the targeted prospects, motivate the end users, and concretize user loyalty.

Having a strong brand is invaluable as competition intensifies. Brand management—that is, the art of creating and maintaining a brand—now requires that the whole organization support its brand with integrated marketing. The stronger the brand, the greater the loyalty of end users is. The stronger the brand, the more flexible an organization is. Higher staff morale leads to higher productivity and better results.

## DEFINITIONS

A brand<sup>2</sup> is a distinguishing name, term, logo, slogan, sign, symbol, or design scheme—and a combination of these—intended to identify a product or service. Branding is the communication effort to promote brand identity,<sup>3</sup> aiming to help end users differentiate<sup>4</sup> the product or service from that of competitors<sup>5</sup>—and view it in a favorable way, often termed brand equity.<sup>6</sup> Branding is devoted to establishing and nurturing a relationship with end users. Indeed, some now define branding as nothing more or less than a relationship. Thus, it is very important to reflect on the fragility of brands: because trust is the basis of all value, organizations that own brands must work hard to retain and deepen it.

## A PRIMER ON BRANDING

The six key concepts in branding are

- When considering a product or service, the targeted prospects hold thoughts and experience feelings.<sup>7</sup> Brand reputation, or brand perception, exists whether an organization considers it or not.

<sup>1</sup> Marketing is the activity, set of institutions, and processes—always interconnected and interdependent—meant to identify, anticipate, create, communicate, deliver, and exchange valuable offerings that satisfy clients, audiences, partners, and society at large.

<sup>2</sup> In its English usage, the word is derived from the Old Norse *brandr*, meaning “to burn.” It refers to the practice that producers had of burning their mark onto products. Although connected with the history of trademarks—of which Roman blacksmiths were the first users when they forged swords, brands were popularized from the 19th century with mass marketing of packaged goods. (Industrialization moved the production of many items from local communities to centralized factories that, when shipping them, would brand their insignia on the barrels used, thereby extending the meaning of brand to that of trademark.)

<sup>3</sup> Brand identity embraces the attributes that a brand aspires to communicate. It is built by brand vision, brand culture, brand personality, positioning, relationships, and presentations. Examples of brand identity are youthfulness, seriousness, reliability, or luxury. The determinants of that include a technical innovation, superior performance, reliability and durability, convenience and ease of ordering, owner safety, and appealing design.

<sup>4</sup> An undifferentiated product or service is a commodity. A commodity is standard, cheap (and becoming cheaper), widely available, and of low status. However, differentiation matters only to the extent that the end users value the difference.

<sup>5</sup> From a marketing perspective, a competitor is a company (or organization) that satisfies, or intends to satisfy, the same clients that your organization satisfies.

<sup>6</sup> Brand equity is the intangible value-added aspect of any given good or service that is otherwise not considered unique.

<sup>7</sup> In other words, a brand is a person's gut feeling about an organization. It is an emotional, sensory understanding of what the organization is rather than an intellectual, rational memory of its tagline or logo.



**“For a business not to advertise is like winking at a girl in the dark. You know what you are doing but no one else does.”**

—Stuart H. Britt

- A brand’s reputation is the sum total of the experiences that clients, audiences, and partners have had with an organization’s products and services—including features, quality, dependability, advertising campaigns, client interaction and service, public relations, presentations, websites, etc. Building a reputation takes time, authenticity, and consistency in words and actions. At the outset, a brand is always a seed that must be designed, positioned, and driven to grow.
- Marketers need a clear idea of the end users with whom the organization plans to build a relationship. Target groups should be tightly defined and well understood in terms of psychographics (covering self-image, self-identification, motives, needs, aspirations, and values) and their competitive sets, viz., the reference they use when thinking about how the product or service fits in their context.<sup>8</sup> Marketers should then conduct continual qualitative research—especially on feelings (rather than facts)—and seek answers severally, for example, by means of intrapersonal theories of psychology, social psychology, sociology, and anthropology.
- A branding strategy is about using certain tools, methods, and approaches to achieve strategic and operational goals.
- Myriads of decisions and tradeoffs are associated with developing a branding strategy. (The goal, marketing requirements, and value proposition of specific products or services may lead to a unique branding strategy for each.)
- An organization’s branding strategy is a component of its overall corporate strategy.

## BRANDING AND SOCIAL MARKETING

Brands are customarily associated with the private sector. Nonetheless, public sector organizations should also be aware of the ways they are portrayed and perceived by society, and endeavor to manage these to demonstrate improved responsiveness to public needs. (Their client orientation and the

breadth of choice they offer to targeted prospects are routinely questioned.) Logically, this can only involve changing their products or services or changing perceptions without changing the products or services.

**“The mass market has split into ever-multiplying, ever-changing sets of micromarkets that demand a continually expanding range of options.”**

—Alvin Toffler

Either way, branding should help. Public sector organizations have, essentially over the last 15 years, often been asked to bring about dramatic overhauls including process improvements<sup>9</sup> and organizational culture shifts. A strong brand personality can attract support for their missions, but also inform these. While public sector organizations typically do not see one another as competitors—and, unlike commercial entities, do not battle it out for clients and attention—it is still critical for them to better define and align vision, culture, and image, and harness the needs of their targeted prospects as commercial marketers do. In sum, brand logic would enable public sector organizations to be perceived as institutions that enable end users to achieve their goals, be relevant to and consistent with how end users view themselves and their lifestyles, help end users relate to others they aspire to be like or associate with,<sup>10</sup> and strengthen or nurture their identity<sup>11</sup> and sense of well-being.

The notion that marketing tools, methods, and approaches might be used to promote social good developed in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Philip Kotler was the first to argue that marketing is relevant to all organizations having customer groups: in 1971, together with Gerald Zaltman,<sup>12</sup> he proposed that social marketing is the design, implementation, and control of programs calculated to influence the acceptability of social ideas and involving considerations of product planning, pricing, communication, distribution, and marketing research. From there, arguing that marketing technologies can influence the voluntary behavior of end users to improve personal welfare and that of society was a short step. Branding would add new ways to think about the current behavior of end users and how

<sup>8</sup> People make choices against a running list of priorities. They perceive a need, seek value, assess value, buy value, and find (or not) value in consumption or use. Naturally, a brand with a positive image makes the end user’s choice easy. Therefore, for brand builders, the effective question should be: “What is the significance of this brand in the end user’s life?”

<sup>9</sup> This includes, for example, shifting out of mass provision to efficient, personalized modes of service provision.

<sup>10</sup> Interestingly, although marketers target a particular group when building a brand, that frequently attracts others. Nonetheless, they must first target to develop the brand relationship before they can facilitate diffusion to a broader market.

<sup>11</sup> Identity relates to individual and collective identification with an organization’s mission, values, corporate strategy, competitive advantage, and brand promise.

<sup>12</sup> Philip Kotler and Gerald Zaltman. 1971. Social Marketing: An Approach to Planned Social Change. *Journal of Marketing*. 35. pp. 3–12. Typically, Kotler had earlier also broken new ground when he proposed that marketing had a role to play in nonprofit organizations. See Philip Kotler and Sidney Levy. 1969. Broadening the Concept of Marketing. *Journal of Marketing*. 33. pp. 10–15. Kotler is widely regarded as the world’s leading authority on marketing. Until he (and Theodore Levitt) turned their attention to the subject in the early 1960s, marketing had not been seen as a serious function of strategic management but as a tiresome occupation best left to sales departments. Importantly, Kotler’s work carries the recurring theme that organizations compete for clients, customers, and audiences and that they cannot succeed by trying to satisfy all segments: they must select and focus on well-defined target groups whose needs they understand. Therefore, marketing must match an organization’s capabilities to appropriate opportunities.



to address that and, just as importantly, serve as a feedback mechanism. (Marketers should consider brands as learning opportunities.)

Notwithstanding, at the beginning of the 21st century, public sector organizations still do not make much use of marketing concepts and tools even though so many have been tested and are at hand. Conversely, attempts at branding in public organizations often arouse derision. Yet, there is considerable promise in well-defined areas: (i) stakeholder mapping, (ii) value chain analysis, (iii) competitive analysis,<sup>13</sup> (iv) Unique Selling Propositions,<sup>14</sup> (v) positioning analysis,<sup>15</sup> (vi) lifestyle segmentation, (vii) copy and concept tests,<sup>16</sup> (viii) experimentation,<sup>17</sup> (ix) customer satisfaction measures, (x) event marketing, (xi) integrated marketing communication, and (xii) niching, among others. In the age of globalization and the internet, many argue that the next big thing in branding is social responsibility: and that surely is where public sector organizations have a niche.

## BRANDING, RELATIONSHIPS, AND BEHAVIOR

The traditional view of the exchange process presented above emphasizes voluntary transactions between parties who exchange something of value in return for satisfaction. However, bearing deep implications for both marketing and branding, a fundamental question is: “Who is exchanging what and with whom?”

**“The purest treasure mortal times afford  
Is spotless reputation: that away,  
Men are but gilded loam or painted clay.”**

—William Shakespeare

Marketers have come to agree that the parties to a transaction are in fact exchanging one behavior with another as individuals or communities. They do not just transact. And so, if relationships—in other words, supply chains—are indeed crucial to marketing and marketing is not an act but a habit, both private and public organizations should

- Think in terms of social capital and relationships, which requires that they plan for the long-term and build brand equity accordingly.
- Consider what deep-seated values relate to the behaviors of targeted prospects and ascertain better what value and motivational attributes their products and services have from the perspective of end users.<sup>18</sup>
- Focus, simplify, and organize products and services by emphasizing and facilitating understanding of their unique selling propositions: therefore, for all products and services marketers should look at the who, what, how, where, when, and why of end-user behaviors.
- Bring more and different partners together to initiate and deploy synergies.
- Constantly monitor and evaluate their efforts by surveying the perceptions of end users.
- Visualize marketing as change management, the success of which hinges on explicit consideration of relevant determinants of intraorganizational behaviors throughout marketing activities, institutions, and processes.
- Accept that organizational behavior is central to marketing and branding:<sup>19</sup> it is a management philosophy for organizational practice; a strategy that helps relate with end users; an organizational tool for structuring and infusing teams; a tactic with which to drive inputs; and a measurement of the relevance, efficiency, efficacy, sustainability, and impact of activities, outputs, and outcomes.<sup>20</sup>

Everybody can own a behavior: that starts with action, not images or words, because clients, audiences, and partners judge organizations by what they do, not what they say. From a marketing perspective, some components of behavior are transparency, authenticity, interactivity, applicability, and sustainability. The attributes of well-regarded brand-owning organizations are leadership, citizenship, pride, talent, innovation, transparency, and long-term view. ■

**“Companies have to wake up to the fact that they are more than a product on a shelf. They’re behavior as well.”**

—Robert Haas

<sup>13</sup> Inexplicably, public sector organizations tend to think of themselves as unique. They would benefit from careful study of for-profit marketers.

<sup>14</sup> The Unique Selling Proposition refers to the unique benefits that an organization's products or services offer targeted prospects that differentiate them from those of competitors. (Instead of looking at the product or service from the organization's viewpoint, the Unique Perceived Benefit considers it from the perspective of the end user.)

<sup>15</sup> Public sector organizations are always pressured to follow the preferences and interests of their stakeholders, sometimes omitting to consider fully alternative positions or learning whether end users perceive their positions in the way the organization does.

<sup>16</sup> Public sector organizations frequently rush to impact, making strategic and tactical blunders that pretesting might have avoided.

<sup>17</sup> Too often, public sector organizations formulate only one “best” strategy, ignoring plausible alternatives that they might test and learn from at modest cost.

<sup>18</sup> There is an interesting side to this: better educated, aware, and informed end users reduce the value of the product- or service-only brand.

<sup>19</sup> The entire organization, including its networks and information technology functions, must be involved in delivering the experience of the products and services that the organization promotes. Hence, marketing must exit functional silos to become a corporate passion—that is, the agile management of the organization's engagement with its external environment. This requires unity of purpose, a “one company” mentality with everyone pulling together. It requires new, integrated skills and tools for database marketing, multimedia and photography, publishing, communications through modern media, public relations, and end-user service, to name a few.

<sup>20</sup> Each behavior measures the health or ill-health of the organization.



## Box: International Organizations in the Globalized Economy

The information technology-savvy protestors who rocked Cologne, Seattle, Washington DC, Prague, Quebec City, and Davos before Nice, Gothenburg, Salzburg, and Genoa—the list grows—are multi-generational, multi-class, and multi-issue oriented. They are a motley crew of lobbyists, activists, pacifists, and extremists. Regardless, they share a distrust of what international organizations (or gatherings) have to say.

Geopolitical, economic, and demographic forces gave birth to anti-globalization about 2 years ago. The phenomenon is spreading and will continue to make headlines. All the same, not a lot is being said about how to cope with it, aside from retreating to mountaintops, fortresses, or islands. For sure, little conversation can be had with hooligans who hurl Molotov cocktails when they are not looting banks, shops, and cars. But international organizations ought to anticipate and respond to the demands of protestors who conduct their activities in peace and with legitimacy. Surveys report also that protestors command a greater level of trust than international organizations: predictably, respondents think that protestors are driven by morals and ethics. All the more reason, then, to act on the perception that there is a democratic deficit. So what can they do expressly?

**Realigning Brands.** Of course, they can raise appeal. The monetary, trade, environmental, and development organizations that the protestors target, in turn, have never done work on branding. They need to align vision, culture, and image. And they must for this find out where these props are out of kilter.

- **Vision and Culture.** Do they practice the values they hold up? Do their visions inspire their cultures?
- **Image and Vision.** Who are their stakeholders? What do they expect? Do the organizations convey their visions to them effectively?
- **Image and Culture.** What images do stakeholders associate with international organizations? How do staffs and stakeholders interact? Do staffs fuss about what stakeholders think?

Misalignment between vision and culture would reveal that the international organizations pursue strategic directions that staffs do not understand or support (or, worse still, that the visions are too grand to implement). The gap would represent a rift between rhetoric and reality. Next, misalignment between image and vision would reveal discrepancies between the image that stakeholders have of international organizations and the vision promoted by the

managers of these organizations. The gap would imply disregard for stakeholders. Finally, misalignment between image and culture would signify confusion among stakeholders as to what international organizations stand for. The gap would mean that international organizations do not put into effect what they preach.

**Defusing Threats.** International organizations can also make potent threats less harmful by providing platforms from which protestors can express their opinions. (In this way, troublemakers would be shown up for what they are.) Many opportunities to do so exist. International organizations can readily grant website access, organize newsgroups, conduct live internet debates, link their websites to those of prominent protestors, and stage press conferences or public debates with them.

**Re-perceiving Social Responsibility.** More profoundly (and sustainably), international organizations can build up more inclusive relationships with members of civil society. How? In no particular order, the plethora of red-hot issues agitating protestors include global warming and climate change, biodiversity, genetically modified organisms, nuclear power, missile defense, disarmament, Third World debt, terms of trade, underdevelopment, corporate dishonesty, anti-capitalism, anti-Americanism, human rights, unfair labor practices, race and gender issues, health, and AIDS. To begin with, international organizations must think about these issues from the perspective of all stakeholders (not just shareholders) to take in changing expectations. Having decided to spend more time on stakeholder analysis—and that means identifying those participants who have the most direct interaction and examining their interests from their points of view—they would soon identify areas where new competencies are required. They would then need to investigate more facts, stretch internal and external networks, think in scenarios to draw out rigorous explorations of possible futures, build the new competencies required to deal with stakeholder concerns, integrate the new competencies into their operating systems, and support these initiatives with positive internal and external strategies safeguarded by independent verification mechanisms.

Global issues call for international organizations. But many people—the great majority of whom are peaceful—are so angered that they travel long distances to protest outside international gatherings. A spirit of inclusion would let their voices be heard in constructive ways. After all, who wants to take over a crisis when it is too late?

Source: Serrat, O. 2001. *International Organizations in the Globalized Economy*. Manila: ADB. Available: [www.adb.org/documents/periodicals/ero/2001/international\\_organizations.asp](http://www.adb.org/documents/periodicals/ero/2001/international_organizations.asp)

## FURTHER READING

- Rita Clifton and John Simmons (eds). 2003. *Brands and Branding*. The Economist Newspaper Ltd.
- Philip Kotler and Gerald Zaltman. 1971. Social Marketing: An Approach to Planned Social Change. *Journal of Marketing*. 35. pp. 3–12.



## MANAGEMENT TECHNIQUES

Leadership is the process of working out the right things to do. Management is the process of doing things right.

# Notions of Knowledge Management

Knowledge management is getting the right knowledge to the right people at the right time, and helping them (with incentives) to apply it in ways that strive to improve organizational performance.



## WHAT IS KNOWLEDGE?

Data are facts, and information is interpreted data. Knowledge is created and organized by flows of information, shaped by their holder. It is tacit or explicit. Tacit knowledge is nonverbalized, intuitive, and unarticulated knowledge that people carry in their heads. It is hard to formalize and communicate because it is rooted in skills, experiences, insight, intuition, and judgment, but it can be shared in discussion, storytelling, and personal interactions. It has a technical dimension, which encompasses skills and capabilities referred to as know-how. It has a cognitive dimension, which consists of beliefs, ideals, values, schemata, or mental models. Explicit knowledge is codified knowledge that can be expressed in writing, drawings, or computer programs, for example, and transmitted in various forms. Tacit knowledge and explicit knowledge are mutually complementary forms of meaning. Figure 1 exemplifies the iceberg metaphor used to describe the hidden nature of tacit knowledge.

## MODEL OF LEARNING PROGRESSION

Forms of meaning such as data and information are more rudimentary than knowledge. Knowledge is more rudimentary than wisdom. Data and information are associated with forms of knowing that are specific and limited. Knowledge is systemic and integrates reason, values, intellect, and intuition. The typical model of learning progression locates knowledge in relation to other forms of meaning. Figure 2 describes stages in human learning.

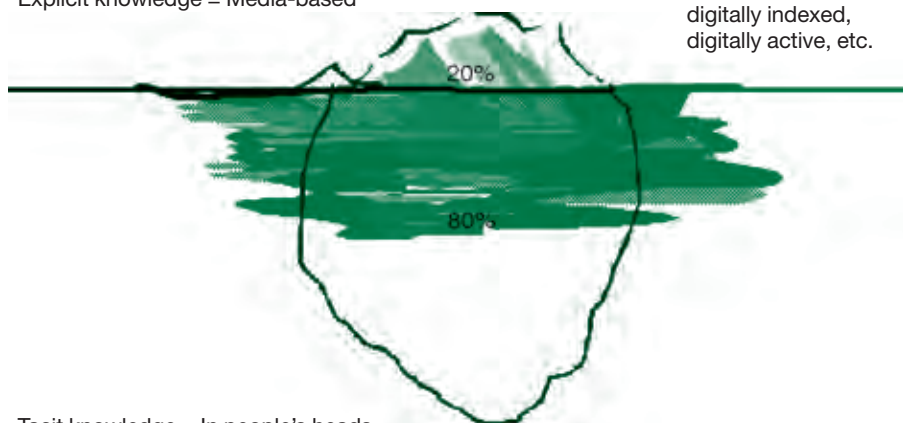
## KNOWLEDGE AGENTS

Most models of knowledge management assume four agents of knowledge, namely the individual, the group, the organization, and the inter-organizational domain. They view knowledge and its creation as a spiral process from the individual to the group, the organization, and sometimes the inter-organizational domain. Figure 3 shows that each agent holds distinct forms of knowledge and performs work that the others cannot. Figure 4 reveals how knowledge is generated by interplay.

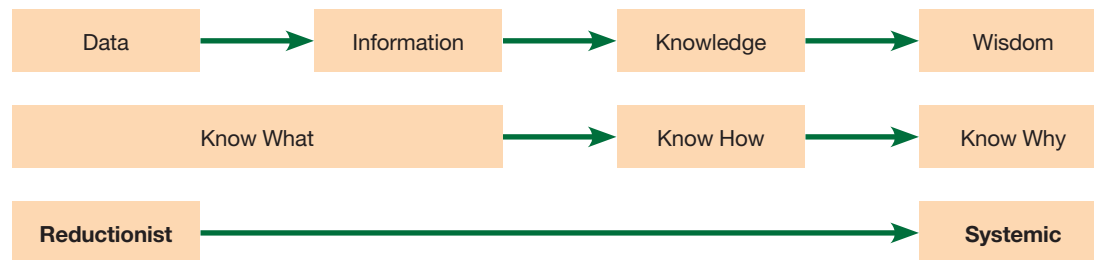
**Figure 1: Knowledge Assets**

Explicit knowledge = Media-based

Paper-based, multimedia, digitally indexed, digitally active, etc.



Source: Author.

**Figure 2: Model of Learning Progression**

Source: Author.

**Figure 3: Knowledge Agents**

	Individual	Group	Intra-Organizational Domain	Inter-Organizational Domain
Data				
Information				
Knowledge				
Wisdom				

Source: Author.

**Figure 4: Knowledge Management Model**

	Individual	Group	Intra-Organizational Domain	Inter-Organizational Domain
Tacit knowledge	Cross-cultural negotiation skills	Team coordination in complex work	Corporate culture	Customer's attitudes to products and expectations
Explicit knowledge	Knowing calculus	Quality circle's documented analysis of its performance	Organization chart	Supplier's patents and documented practices

Source: Hedlund, G. and Nonaka, I. 1993. Models of Knowledge Management in the West and Japan. In Lorange, P. et al., eds. *Implementing Strategic Processes: Change, Learning, and Cooperation*. London: Macmillan.

## MODES OF KNOWLEDGE CREATION

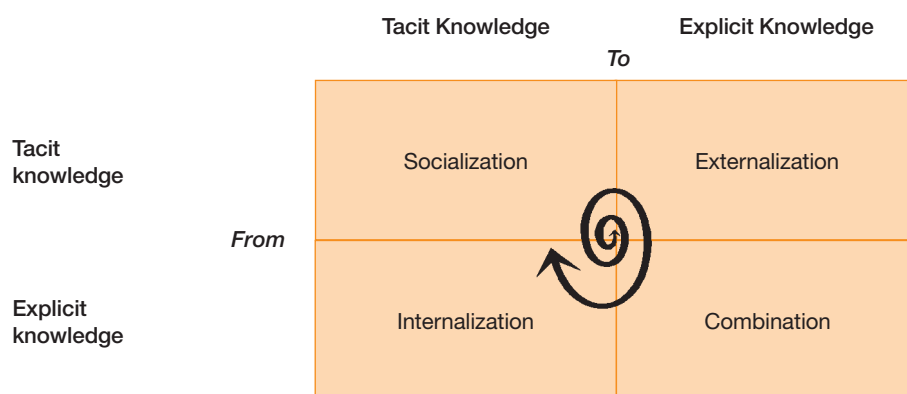
In large organizations, knowledge is created through continuous dialogue on tacit and explicit knowledge via four patterns of interactions: **socialization**, **externalization**, **combination**, and **internalization**.

Figure 5 frames the process of knowledge creation. Socialization is the process of creating common tacit knowledge through interactions including observation, imitation, or apprenticeships. Externalization is the process of articulating tacit knowledge into explicit knowledge by means of metaphors, analogies, or sketches. Combination is the process of assembling new and existing explicit knowledge into systemic knowledge such as a set of specifications for the prototype of a new product. Combination involves combining explicit knowledge through meetings and conversations or using information systems. Internalization converts explicit

knowledge into tacit knowledge. Externalization converts tacit knowledge into explicit knowledge.

There are five conditions to encouraging the process of knowledge creation: intention, autonomy, creative chaos, redundancy, and requisite variety. Managers must be committed to accumulating, exploiting, and renewing the knowledge base within the organization and be able to create management systems that will facilitate the process. New ideas usually develop at the individual level, rather than at the group or organization levels, and the individuals generating it must be given scope to follow their initiatives. This process of exploration can be encouraged by creative chaos, where flux and crisis cause people to reconsider precepts at a fundamental level. Incentives can then be given to exchange knowledge rather than ration or hoard it. The organization should be made to be conducive to this.

**Figure 5: Modes of Knowledge Creation**



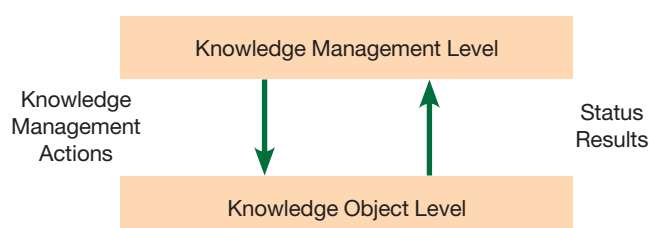
Source: Adapted from Nonaka, Ikujiro. 1994. A Dynamic Theory of Organizational Knowledge Creation. *Organization Science*. 5 (1). pp. 14–37.

## KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT LEVELS

Management implies a set of activities directed at an object. Figure 6 defines two aspects of knowledge management: a knowledge management level dealing with a knowledge object level.

If knowledge is an organizational asset, as resource-based views of organizations suggest, its management will need to live up to objectives that are common to all resources. Typically, these objectives endeavor to make sure that the resource is delivered at the right time, available at the right place, present

**Figure 6: Levels in Knowledge Management**



Source: Author.



in the right shape, obtained at the lowest possible cost, and of the required quality. Apart from the question of how to achieve this, it must be understood that knowledge does have properties that set it apart from other resources. It is intangible and difficult to measure, volatile, and embodied in agents with wills. It is not consumed in a process; conversely, it can increase with use. It cannot always be bought on the market; on the contrary, its development can require lead time. It is nonrival in that it can be used by different processes simultaneously. And, its use can have wide-ranging impacts.

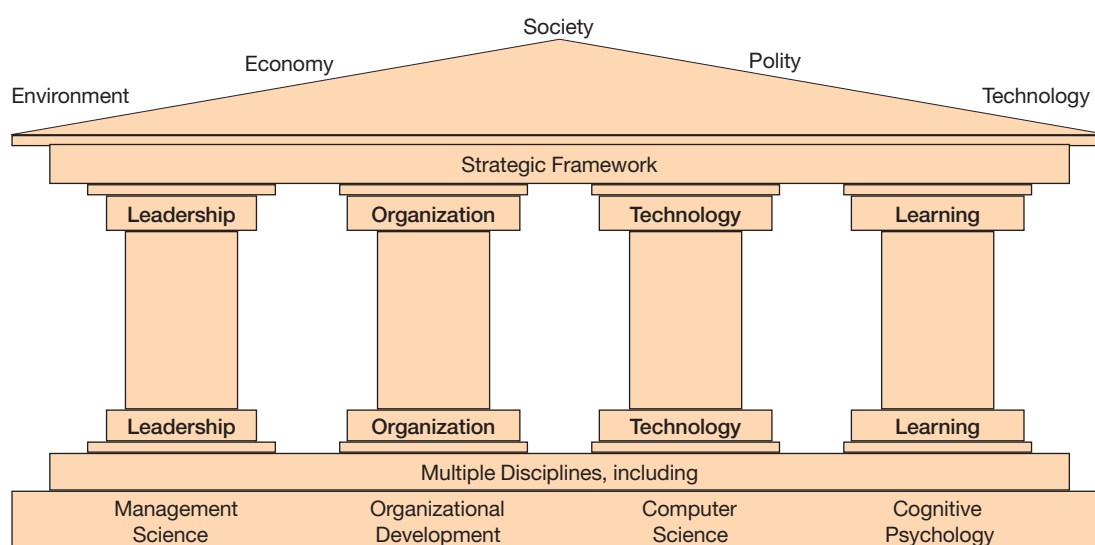
## KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT ARCHITECTURE

The architecture of knowledge management must be strengthened in support of organization-wide initiatives.

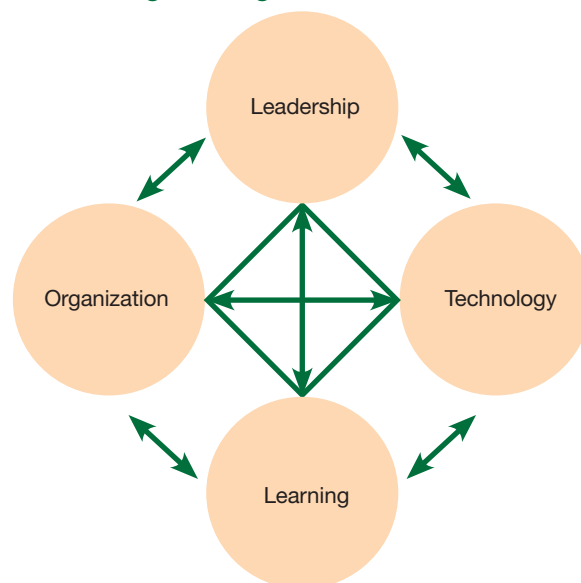
Figure 7 shows its four pillars to be leadership, organization, technology, and learning. Figure 8 exemplifies the need to seek balanced interconnectivity.

- **Leadership.** Leadership develops the strategies necessary to position for success in an environment. Those strategies determine vision and must align knowledge management with business tactics to drive the values of knowledge management throughout the organization. Focus must be placed on building executive support. Successful implementation of a knowledge management strategy requires champions at or near the top of an organization.
- **Organization.** Respect for knowledge must pervade an organization. Introducing knowledge management requires organizational change, and knowledge management inevitably acts as a catalyst to transform the organization's culture. The increasing value placed on capable people, rising job
- complexity, and the universal availability of information on the internet are fundamental changes contributing to attempts to leverage knowledge management solutions. To begin to change an organization, knowledge management must be integrated into business processes and connected to changes in organizational culture.
- **Technology.** Knowledge management tools are essential to achieving knowledge management strategies. However, any technical solution must add value to the process and achieve measurable improvements. Properly assessing and defining information technology capabilities is essential, as is identifying and deploying best-of-breed knowledge management tools to match and align with the organization's requirements. Ten processes that must be built collectively make up full-function knowledge management:
  - capture and store,
  - search and retrieve,
  - send critical information to individuals or groups,
  - structure and navigate,
  - share and collaborate,
  - synthesize,
  - profile and personalize,
  - solve or recommend,
  - integrate, and
  - maintain.
- **Learning.** People are responsible for using knowledge management tools in support of organizational performance. Organizational learning must be addressed with approaches such as increasing internal communications, promoting cross-functional teams, and

**Figure 7: Knowledge Management Architecture**



Source: Adapted from Stankosky, Michael. 2000. A Theoretical Framework. *KM World*. Special Millennium Issue.

**Figure 8: Balanced Knowledge Management**

Source: Author.

creating a learning community. Learning is an integral part of knowledge management. In this context, learning can be described as the acquisition of knowledge or a skill through study, experience, or instruction. Organizations must recognize that people operate and communicate through learning that includes the social processes of collaborating, sharing knowledge, and building on each other's ideas. Managers must recognize that knowledge resides in people and that knowledge creation occurs through the process of social interaction.

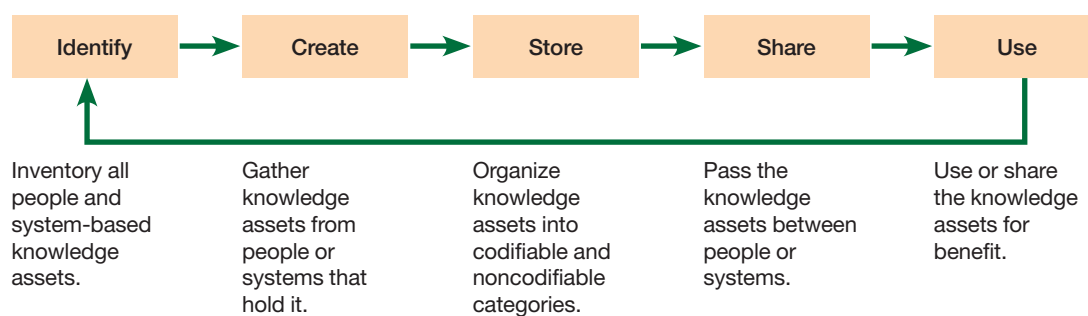
### CORE KNOWLEDGE ACTIVITIES

Knowledge management activities can be described in relation to many different disciplines and approaches but almost all focus on five basic activities: identify, create, store, share, and use. Figure 9 interprets the routine associated with core knowledge activities.

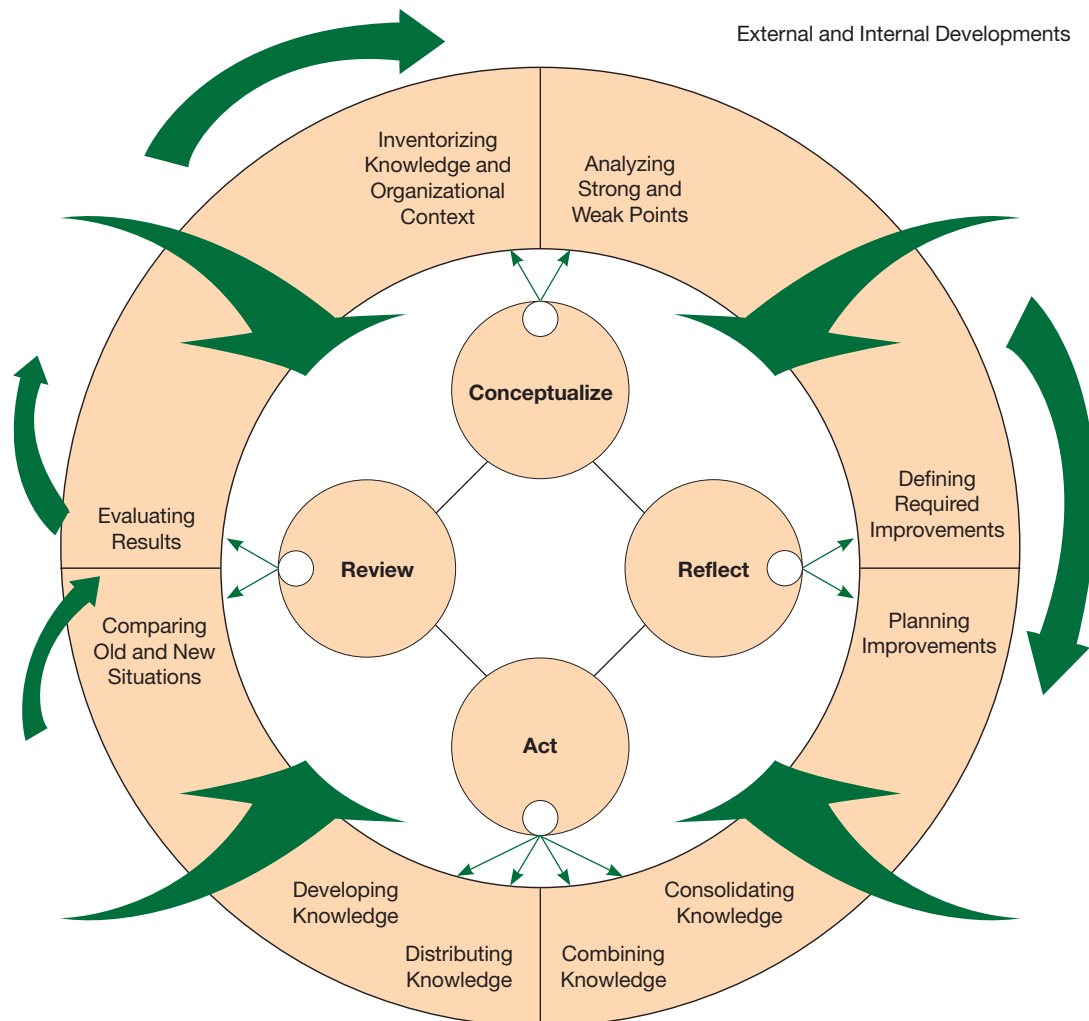
### KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT ACTIVITIES

Treating knowledge as a resource opens up promising opportunities for knowledge management activities. These can be split into four categories, each impacting a particular time segment of the knowledge management cycle. They relate to reviewing, conceptualizing, reflecting, and acting.

Reviewing involves checking what has been achieved in the past and what the current state of affairs is. Conceptualizing entails sitting back, trying to grasp the state of knowledge in the organization, and analyzing the strong and weak points of its knowledge architecture. Reflecting calls for directing toward improvements by selecting the optimal plans for correcting bottlenecks and analyzing them for risks that might accompany their implementation. Acting is the actual effectuation of the plans selected. Figure 10 delineates the knowledge management cycle and the methods and techniques that drive it.

**Figure 9: Core Knowledge Activities**

Source: Author.

**Figure 10: Knowledge Management Cycle**

Source: Wiig, K., de Hoog, R., van der Spek, R. 1997. Supporting Knowledge Management: A Selection of Methods and Techniques. *Expert Systems with Applications*. 13 (1). pp. 15-17.

Most of the time, the actions will be one or a combination of generic operations that involve developing knowledge, i.e., buying knowledge, establishing learning programs; distributing knowledge, i.e., channeling knowledge to the points of action, preparing manuals, connecting networks; combining knowledge, i.e., finding synergies, reusing existing knowledge; and consolidating knowledge, i.e., preventing knowledge from disappearing, instituting tutoring programs, establishing knowledge transfer programs.

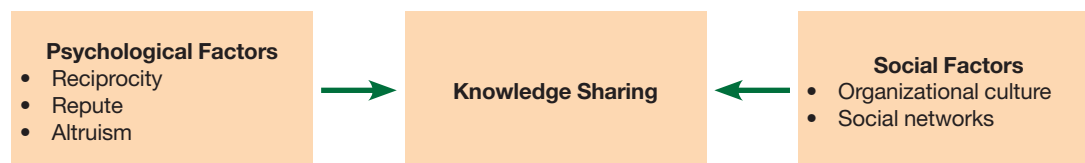
### CULTURAL ROADBLOCKS TO KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT SUCCESS

Culture has been characterized as the glue that holds organizations together. It can, for instance, be a critical success factor in the execution of strategy. It can play a crucial role in determining the success or failure of operations. At the micro

level, there are close relationships between organizational culture, employee satisfaction, and job commitment and turnover. As one might expect, organizational culture plays a pivotal role in knowledge management.

Organizational culture is shaped by many factors, some of which can be changed while others are intractable. Organizations adapt to their external environments by designing responsive structures and systems, adopting relevant technologies, and harvesting appropriate skills and qualities. Though constrained by their external environments, organizations make choices that, collectively, eventually define their cultures. These choices are influenced by the mission, values, and norms of each organization and the assumptions of its leaders. In due course, the choices will also define the success or failure of knowledge management initiatives. Thus, knowledge is inextricably bound to human cognition, and its



**Figure 11: Barriers Affecting Knowledge Sharing**

Source: Author.

management will occur within a structured psychological and social context. Figure 11 juxtaposes the psychological and social barriers that impact knowledge sharing.

### Psychological Factors

Knowledge represents a source of power to people. By sharing valuable knowledge with a colleague, one runs the risk of diminishing one's value in an organization; potentially, one is no longer indispensable. There are three conditions under which, as an employee, one will share knowledge: reciprocity, repute, and altruism. One's time and energy are finite and one will more often than not take the time to help a colleague if one is likely to receive valuable knowledge in return, either now or in the future. In addition, it is in one's interest to be viewed as an expert in an organization; if one does not have a reputation for expertise, one's knowledge cannot represent a source of power. Likewise, before sharing, one needs to be certain that colleagues will acknowledge the source of knowledge and will not claim credit for it. But, in a process akin to self-gratification, there is also the need to talk to others about subjects that one finds fascinating and important.

Following resource-based views of organizations, which identify knowledge as potentially the primary source

of sustainable competitive advantage, one can imagine that there are internal markets for knowledge within organizations. Knowledge is exchanged between buyers and sellers, with reciprocity, repute, and altruism functioning as payment mechanisms. Trust, however, is an essential condition to the smooth functioning of such a market. This trust can exist at an individual level, through close working relationships between colleagues, or at group and organization levels, by the creation of a cultural context that encourages and rewards knowledge sharing and discourages and penalizes knowledge hoarding.

### Social Factors

Organizational culture, and the social networks that frame it, is the most frequently cited roadblock to knowledge management success. Based on understanding of psychological factors, the onus is on leadership to drive people-focused knowledge management and move from old to new knowledge management paradigms. People are more likely to understand and energetically support an initiative when they observe leadership behavior that is both credible and supportive. Box 1 summarizes the differences between what may be termed industrial and knowledge cultures.

## Box 1: Industrial and Knowledge Culture Paradigms

### Industrial Culture

- Limited information distribution
- Many management levels
- Uneven responsibility
- Rules based
- Structured
- Risk averse
- Inward orientation
- Occasional training
- Financial focus
- Political

### Knowledge Culture

- Wide information distribution
- Few management levels
- Shared responsibility
- Principles based
- Unstructured
- Able to take some risks
- Outward orientation
- Continuous learning
- Marketing focus
- Open

Source: Author.



The table below makes observations on organization and culture, and suggests what might lie a little beyond the knowledge culture. One may appreciate that

- cultures are not static (there is movement from left to right);
- individuals who are absorbed in a particular culture tend to find the culture to the right a little meaningless and the culture to the left almost valueless;
- transition from one culture to another is not smooth; and
- the concepts of control, responsibility, and contribution provide interesting analytical links between cultures.

### Assessing the Behavior–Performance Continuum

Within any organization there may also be a variety of cultures—shaped by characteristic differences in professional orientation, status, power, visibility, and other factors. Understanding these cultures in terms of their expected behaviors helps to appreciate why organizational units can

exhibit behaviors that are opposite to the organization's expressed mission, values, and norms. At a more pressing level, behaviors can also temper what cooperation is displayed in a group. Thus, cultures create behaviors, some of which can result in obstructive (or at least nonconstructive) interactions that limit knowledge sharing and, in the fullness of time, hold back knowledge management. Assessing the behavior–performance continuum of key stakeholders in knowledge management initiatives will spell the difference between success or failure. It transcends the notion of knowledge flows that is fundamental to knowledge management initiatives and has deep implications for fostering ownership among those involved in associated efforts.

### EARLY PATHWAYS TO PROGRESS

Figure 12 poses simple questions to locate an organization's progress toward knowledge management. Box 2 highlights early pathways to progress.

**Table: Organization and Culture**

	Feudal Culture	Industrial Culture	Knowledge Culture	Creativity Culture
Organization	Territorial	Hierarchies	Networks	Flows
Focus	Land	Profit	Customer	Innovation
Culture	Domination Control	Control Responsibility	Responsibility Contribution	Contribution Creativity
Key Measure	Quantity	Efficiency	Effectiveness	Quality of Life

Source: Author.

**Figure 12: Where Are You in the Journey?**



Source: Author.

### Box 2: Early Signposts to Knowledge Management

- Knowledge products and services are strategic and must be accounted for and valued accordingly.
- Knowledge management requires integration and balancing of leadership, organization, technology, and learning in an organization-wide setting.
- Knowledge management must both meet the requirements of and conditions for success and the desired benefits and expectations of the organization.
- Organizational culture affects knowledge management, especially at the lower levels.
- Streamlined organizations with strong organizational cultures have a higher chance of success in knowledge management.
- An atmosphere of trust is a precondition to knowledge sharing.
- Proposals for knowledge management should include both soft and hard measures if managers are to support knowledge management initiatives.
- The success factors for knowledge management are dominated by management concerns for people, process, and outcome orientation. They are interspersed throughout the knowledge management architecture of leadership, organization, technology, and learning.

Source: Author.

## GETTING RESULTS FROM KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT

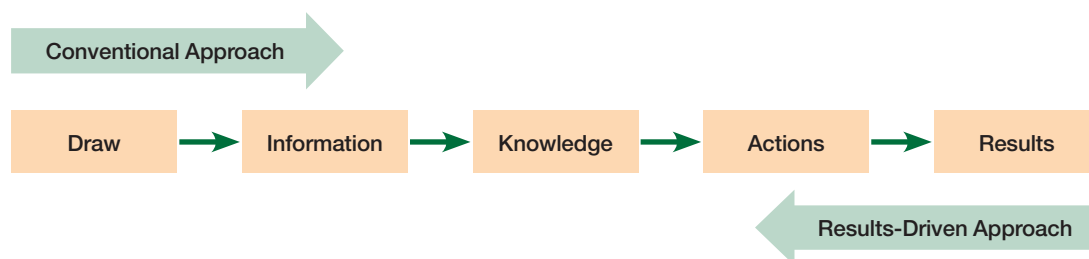
First and foremost, knowledge management is about results. Figure 2 described the typical model of learning progression data are analyzed to generate information, information is placed in context to produce knowledge, and evaluated knowledge begets wisdom (or informed actions). However, there are limits to looking upstream and concentrating on the supply of knowledge. It can result in the creation of unfocused data and information whereby strategy is blindly driven by technology. It is also helpful to examine the desired results and deduce what knowledge will be required to accomplish them. Figure 13 demonstrates how awareness of the stages in human learning can be exercised to imbed the relationships between forms of meaning to focus on results. It reinforces the idea

that knowledge management is primarily a matter of people, process, and outcome orientation.

## BUILDING COMMITMENT

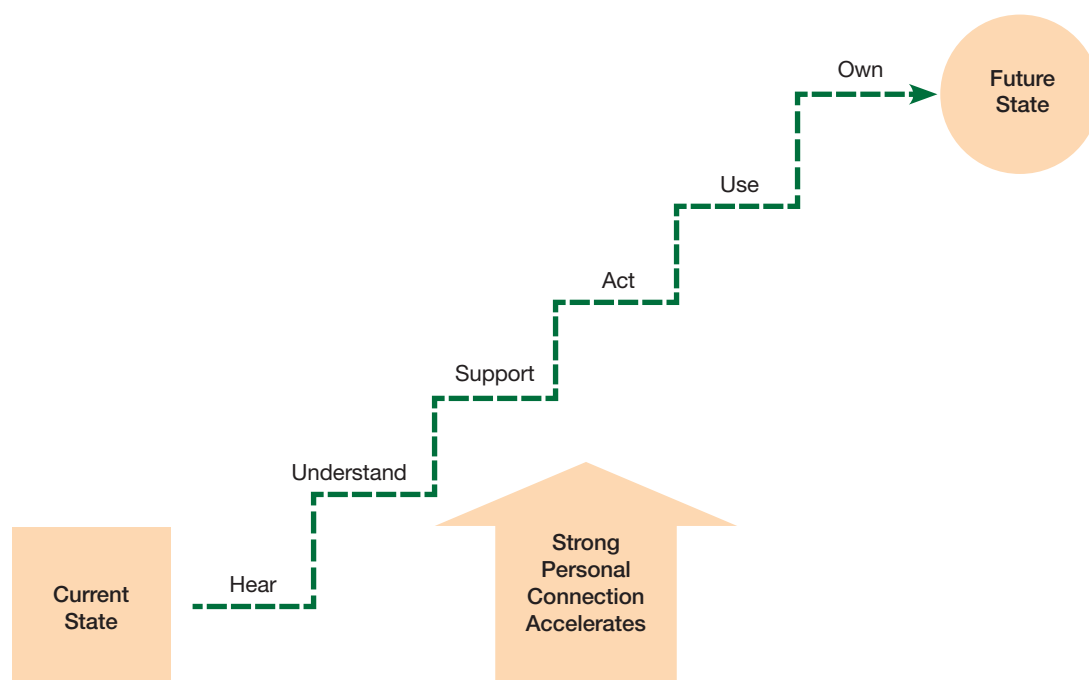
As part of an approach to managing change programs, it is helpful to observe the stages that people live through before committing to a new way of working. From simple awareness, they must first hear, then understand the change. Based on the actions of leaders and peers, they then opt to support the change and can be seen to act in the desired manner. Commitment is built when they use the new way of working in regular activities and finally own the change in their environment. At every stage, commitment is fragile and invokes active sponsorship from leaders. Figure 14 illustrates the process of committing to change. ■

**Figure 13: A Results-Driven Knowledge Management Model**



Source: Author.

**Figure 14: A Results-Driven Knowledge Management Model**



Source: Author.



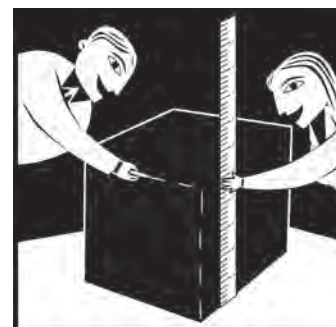
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- ADB. 2007. *Learning Lessons in ADB*. Manila. Available: [www.adb.org/documents/reports/learning-lessons-adb/strategic-framework-2007-2009.asp](http://www.adb.org/documents/reports/learning-lessons-adb/strategic-framework-2007-2009.asp)
- . 2008. *Auditing the Lessons Architecture*. Manila. Available: [www.adb.org/documents/studies/auditing-lessons-architecture/in371-07.asp](http://www.adb.org/documents/studies/auditing-lessons-architecture/in371-07.asp)



# Output Accomplishment and the Design and Monitoring Framework

The design and monitoring framework is a logic model for objectives-oriented planning that structures the main elements in a project, highlighting linkages between intended inputs, planned activities, and expected results.



Logic models (results frameworks) neither guarantee a good project (or program) design nor replace other instruments of project management. But they help to analyze problems; identify desired outcomes; establish a logical hierarchy of means by which the desired outcomes will be reached; identify clusters of

outputs; determine how accomplishments might be monitored and evaluated, and planned and actual results compared; flag the assumptions on which a project is based and the associated risks; summarize a project in a standard format; build consensus with stakeholders; and create ownership of the project.

**Table 1: The Design and Monitoring Framework**

Design Summary	Performance Targets and Indicators	Data Sources and Reporting Mechanisms	Assumptions and Risks
<b>Impact:</b> The broader impact of the project at sector and national levels	Measures of the extent to which the project has contributed to the impact	Sources of information and ways to gather and report it	Assumptions and risks at the impact level are beyond the control of the project but essential to attainment of the impact
<b>Outcome:</b> The expected outcome at the end of the project	Conditions at the end of the project indicating that its outcome has been achieved	Sources of information and ways to gather and report it	Assumptions and risks at the outcome level are those that relate to attainment of outcome targets
<b>Outputs:</b> The direct results of the project (works, goods, and services)	Measures of the quantity and quality of outputs and the timing of their delivery	Sources of information and ways to gather and report it	Assumptions and risks at the output level are those that are external and beyond the control of the project implementers but essential for successful attainment of the outputs
<b>Activities with Milestones:</b> The tasks executed to deliver the outputs identified			<b>Inputs:</b> The various resource categories required to undertake the project should be identified

Source: Author.

They also support creative analysis. It is a rare project that unfolds exactly according to plan. During project implementation, one must pay close attention to the cause-and-effect relationships between inputs, activities with milestones, outputs, outcome, and impact. Repeatedly, one must make certain that inputs for activities are deployed

successfully. Or one must adjust the means of attaining the outcome, including the definition of outputs, the mix of activities, and the indicators needed to measure accomplishment of the newly defined performance targets. Administration can become complex and it helps to have structure. Because of this, it is useful to deepen and extend



typical logic models, for example, using the tool depicted below. (It lists only two targets per output). For each output, one can examine methodically whether targets are being achieved, how the activities are being implemented, and how activities might be improved. One can then itemize individual action plans, which should be monitored constantly.

Systematic analysis of output accomplishment leads to telling improvements in relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, and

sustainability, thereby achieving impact. It clarifies materially the chain of causality in a design and monitoring framework. ■

### FURTHER READING

ADB. 2007. *Guidelines for Preparing a Design and Monitoring Framework*. Manila. Available: [www.adb.org/documents/guidelines/guidelines-preparing-dmf/guidelines-preparing-dmf.pdf](http://www.adb.org/documents/guidelines/guidelines-preparing-dmf/guidelines-preparing-dmf.pdf)

**Table 2: Analysis of Output Accomplishment and Improvement of Activities**

<b>Output</b>				Nº
<b>Targets</b>				Nº
				Nº
Is the output being accomplished?	Yes	Partially	No	
Are the targets being achieved?				
Nº				
Nº				
How are the targets being implemented?				
<b>Strength</b>	<b>Weakness</b>			
Nº	Nº			
Nº	Nº			
How can the activities be improved?				
<b>Proposed Change</b>	<b>Justification</b>			
Nº	Nº			
Nº	Nº			
Action plan to improve the activities				
<b>Action</b>	<b>Target Date</b>			
Nº	Nº			
Nº	Nº			

Source: Author.





# The Perils of Performance Measurement

Interest in performance measurement grows daily but the state of the art leaves much to be desired. To promote performance leadership, one must examine both its shortcomings and its pernicious effects.



## THE SIMPLE INTENT OF PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT

The use of yardsticks to measure performance needs no arguing: one cannot improve what one cannot measure. More emphatically, in the words of Joseph Juran,<sup>1</sup> “Without a standard there is no logical basis for making a decision or taking action.”

Performance measurement, a key driver of the Plan–Do–Check–Act iterative cycle that W. Edwards Deming<sup>2</sup> promoted, is the process of gauging achievements against stated goals. A major determinant of sustainable competitive advantage, it hangs on the development of SMART<sup>3</sup> indicators—customarily in a results chain linking activities, inputs, outputs, and outcome to impact—that one should track to reliably verify and promote organizational success. Pre–post comparisons can then be made to assess the relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, sustainability, and impact of endeavors (at least in the case of larger-scale ventures).

## A GRAIN OF SALT

Today, performance is appraised the world over: in academia, the arts, business, entertainment, government, news, politics, schools, science, sports, and war, among others. In the public sector, the need to sell the idea that management is improving means that indicators proliferate, on the whole, without regard for unintended consequences from the practice. Performance indicators are simultaneously misunderstood, overpromoted, and accordingly misused.

“I conceive that the great part of the miseries of mankind are brought upon them by false estimates they have made of the value of things.”

— Benjamin Franklin

- First, conflicting *definitions* of performance indicators abound. In their shortest yet most stringent expression, they are a numerical measure of the degree to which an objective is being achieved. (From this interpretation, indicators are prone to merge with objectives and effectively become targets.) Others<sup>4</sup> consider them an observable change or event that provides evidence that something has happened, be that an output delivered, an immediate effect occurred, or a long-term process observed. To such discerning interpreters, indicators do not offer proof so much as reliable clues that the change or event being claimed has actually happened or is happening: rather, evidence from several indicators will make a convincing case for claims being made.

“It is hard to go beyond your public. If they are satisfied with cheap performance, you will not easily arrive at better. If they know what is good, and require it, you will aspire and burn until you achieve it. But from time to time, in history, men are born a whole age too soon.”

— Ralph Waldo Emerson

<sup>1</sup> Joseph Juran (1904–2008), an American electrical engineer and management consultant, was an evangelist of quality and its management.

<sup>2</sup> William Edwards Deming (1900–1993), an American electrical engineer, statistician, and management consultant, pioneered contemporaneously with Joseph Juran the quality management revolution that took place in postwar Japan.

<sup>3</sup> SMART indicators are specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time bound.

<sup>4</sup> See Oliver Bakewell, Jerry Adams, and Brian Pratt. 2004. Sharpening the Development Process: A Practical Guide to Monitoring and Evaluation. *International NGO Training and Research Center Praxis Paper Series*.





- Second, complex issues of *cause-and-effect* are seldom considered. Obviously, performance indicators can only pertain to matters that an agency controls.<sup>5</sup> But agencies never command much and usually settle for subprime indicators that afford enough control for their purposes. This reality is intrinsic to all human endeavors, especially those that touch political decision making or aim to spark social change.<sup>6</sup> (Never mind that outcomes will, in many cases, emerge long after the effort—to which other agencies or even units in the same agency may have been unknown parties—has been deployed.) Consequently, interest has grown in approaches to planning, monitoring, and evaluation of outcomes and their metrics that consider actor-centered development and behavioral change, continuous learning and flexibility, participation and accountability, as well as non-linearity and contribution (not attribution and control).<sup>7</sup>
- Third, the *dimensions of performance* mentioned earlier—namely, relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, sustainability, and impact—intimate that there can be no single assessment of accomplishments overall. Performance is an amalgam of dimensions, some of which may conflict. Measuring it calls for an appropriate basket of benchmarks, developed with full knowledge of their interrelationships.
- Fourth, performance measurement must have a *purpose*—it can never be an end in itself. According to Robert Behn<sup>8</sup>, the separate reasons for engaging in it are to evaluate<sup>9</sup>, control, budget, motivate, promote, celebrate, learn, and improve. (The list could be shorter or longer: shorter in that the genuine purpose of measuring accomplishments is the last; longer in that the seven others, to which more could be added, can perhaps be considered as some important means for achieving the first.) Manifestly, no single metric is appropriate for all eight objectives. Therefore, practitioners had better consider the managerial purpose(s) to which performance measurement might contribute—these, alas, being ordinarily to control and budget—and how they might best deploy an informative<sup>10</sup> blend of measures anchored in context. Only then will they be able to select valid

yardsticks with the characteristics necessary to help meet each purpose, directly and indirectly, concentrating on what matters most.

- Fifth, many *other things* besides performance indicators are needed to ameliorate achievements (after the indicators have been recognized for what they are, namely, individual links in a results chain). The other requisites include Board, Management, and staff who are focused on meeting the explicit and latent needs of client, audiences, and partners; leadership and commitment to developing and extending products and services; and a culture of openness in which personnel are encouraged and willing to question why they do what they do.

**“There are two possible outcomes: if the result confirms the hypothesis, then you’ve made a measurement. If the result is contrary to the hypothesis, then you’ve made a discovery.”**

— Enrico Fermi

### ... AND SOME PERNICIOUS EFFECTS

Cynics might argue—thankfully, perhaps, given the state of affairs—that performance measures are seldom used to make decisions.<sup>11</sup> Yet, they do have effects from the suspicion that actions, e.g., sanctions or rewards, might be based on such information. True to form—be they people, rats, or monkeys—organisms compete for scarce resources. They will also naturally search what behaviors and related activities are recompensed and then endeavor to perform these, often to the exclusion of things not rewarded.

In the public sector, but likely elsewhere too, sanctions or rewards can therefore pay off for behaviors other than what they seek. Gloria Grizzle<sup>12</sup> identifies numerous unintended consequences of attempts to measure outcomes, gauge client satisfaction, calculate the quantity of work performed, and introduce efficiency measures. She thinks that, as a general remedy, moral codes and professional standards should

<sup>5</sup> In the real world, where complexity reigns, a myriad factors impact that do not relate to the activities, inputs, and outputs delivered by an agency. And, it is never easy to account for them—in the odd instances where they are discernable—by listing the assumptions and risks that might affect performance. (The imagination and experience of personnel, in any case, limit the consideration of external factors.)

<sup>6</sup> The structure that logical frameworks provide for thinking is helpful. But the failure of linear thinking to cope with unintended consequences makes up one of the most recurrent criticisms of “lock frame” models, especially when they are revisited at evaluation. Logical frameworks patently assume that people have such powers of foresight that neither unforeseen routes nor unanticipated effects are important. In practice, however, their false precision impoverishes the phenomena under scrutiny, going as far as to exclude unanticipated benefits outside the original purview. Sadly, attempts to make logical frameworks flexible have not kept up with changes in the environments in which the tool was planted.

<sup>7</sup> Outcome mapping, developed by the International Development Research Center, is one such approach. The Balanced Scorecard conceptualized by Robert Kaplan and Richard Norton is another: it encompasses client, financial, business process, and learning and growth perspectives.

<sup>8</sup> See Robert Behn. 2003. Why Measure Performance? Different Purposes Require Different Measures. *Public Administration Review*. September–October. 63 (5). pp. 586–606.

<sup>9</sup> That, for example, might cover economic (activity) evaluation, operations evaluation, and/or managerial evaluation.

<sup>10</sup> Performance indicators will not serve if they are brandished to judge performance.

<sup>11</sup> One explanation might be that performance measurement frameworks for understanding and defining metrics, collecting and analyzing data, and prioritizing and tacking action are never spelled out.

<sup>12</sup> Gloria Grizzle. 2002. Performance Measurement and Dysfunction: The Dark Side of Quantifying Work. *Public Performance and Management Review*. June. 25 (4). pp. 363–369.

**Table 1: Eight Reasons to Measure Performance**

Purpose	The Question That the Performance Measure can Help Answer
<b>Evaluate</b>	How well is my organization performing?
<b>Control</b>	How can I ensure that my subordinates are doing the right thing?
<b>Budget</b>	On what programs, people, projects, or programs should my agency spend the public's money?
<b>Motivate</b>	How can I motivate line staff, middle managers, nonprofit and for-profit collaborators, stakeholders, and citizens to do the things necessary to improve performance?
<b>Promote</b>	How can I convince political superiors, legislators, stakeholders, journalists, and citizens that my organization is doing a good job?
<b>Celebrate</b>	What accomplishments are worthy of the important organizational ritual of celebrating success?
<b>Learn</b>	Why is what working or not working?
<b>Improve</b>	What exactly should who do differently to improve performance?

Source: Robert Behn. 2003. Why Measure Performance? Different Purposes Require Different Measures. *Public Administration Review*. September–October. 63 (5). pp. 586–606.

**Table 2: Characteristics of Performance Measures for Different Purposes**

Purpose	The Characteristic of a Performance Measure to Achieve the Purpose
<b>Evaluate</b>	Outcomes, combined with input, output, and process measures, that appreciate the effects of exogenous factors
<b>Control</b>	Inputs that can be regulated
<b>Budget</b>	Efficiency measures—specifically, outputs or outcomes divided by inputs
<b>Motivate</b>	Near real-time outputs compared with production targets
<b>Promote</b>	Easily understood aspects of performance about which people care
<b>Celebrate</b>	Periodic and significant performance targets that, when achieved, provide people with a concrete sense of personal and collective accomplishment
<b>Learn</b>	Disaggregated data that reveals deviancies from the expected
<b>Improve</b>	Inside-the-black-box relationships that connect changes in operations to changes in outputs and outcomes

Source: Adapted from Robert Behn. 2003. Why Measure Performance? Different Purposes Require Different Measures. *Public Administration Review*. September–October. 63 (5). pp. 586–606.

normally suffice to prescribe right action.<sup>13</sup> Naturally, specific remedies should be applied to specific problems, most of which ought to be built into the measurement process itself.

Since the principal managerial purposes to which performance measurement contributes are control and budget—control more often than not exercised by means of the budget, it pays to examine the counterproductive effects associated with the crude use of budgets in (much of) the private sector (but in other sectors, too). In Michael Jensen's<sup>14</sup> opinion, for instance, traditional budgeting processes in corporations waste

time, distort decisions, and turn honest managers into schemers. Quoting, “Corporate budgeting is a joke, and everyone knows it. It consumes a huge amount of executives’ time, forcing them into endless rounds of dull meetings and tense negotiations. It encourages managers to lie and cheat, lowballing targets and inflating results, and it penalizes them for telling the truth. It turns business decisions into elaborate exercises in gaming. It sets colleague against colleague, creating distrust and ill will. And it distorts incentives, motivating people to act in ways that run counter to the best interests of their companies.”

<sup>13</sup> Needless to say, there must be trust in the workplace that fair use will be made of performance information and that the measurement process should be an empowering, not disempowering, experience. This may require more attention to the design of work environments that promote right action.

<sup>14</sup> Michael Jensen. 2001. Corporate Budgeting Is Broken—Let's Fix It. *Harvard Business Review*. 11. pp. 94–101.



To be sure, Michael Jensen agrees that the budget process itself is not the root cause of counterproductive actions; rather, it is the use of budget targets to determine compensation.<sup>15</sup> Comparing traditional,<sup>16</sup> curvilinear,<sup>17</sup> and linear<sup>18</sup> compensation plans, he argues that only by severing the link between budgets and bonuses—in brief, by rewarding people purely for accomplishments, not ability to hit targets—will organizations remove the incentive to cheat. (Since many public sector organizations now have pay-for-performance plans, seeing how the three types might impact behavior there will not stretch imagination.)

**“Earnings can be pliable as putty when a charlatan heads the company reporting them.”**

—Warren Buffett

As though the situation was not complicated enough, moving from individual to divisional performance measurement, Michael Jensen<sup>19</sup> explains elsewhere that performance indicators should reflect the functions of different business units—that is, most large organizations adopt divisionalized structures, frequently categorized as cost, revenue, profit, investment, and expense<sup>20</sup> centers. Here, an intuitive issue of performance reporting is whether divisional managers should be held accountable for things they cannot influence. Therefore, the manner in which divisional performance is measured, monitored, controlled, and reported on—typically at the behest of, sometimes directly by, higher levels in the hierarchy and often by means of budgets—is particularly important. Should different performance measures and associated decision rights closely relevant to the functions fulfilled not be used more often, certainly in the public sector,<sup>21</sup> to evaluate the performance of divisions? In matters of budgeting, managerial flexibility, decentralization, and devolution would go a long way to offset the perils of performance measurement. As things now stand, the budget too often stands as the de facto strategy.

## TRANSFORMING PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT

What is important cannot always be measured and what can be measured is not necessarily important. These days, what matters most in organizations are intangible sources of value—such as human and customer capital—and their measurement and management challenge traditional, “technical” approaches. Reverting to Robert Behn,<sup>22</sup> it is therefore a matter of helping managers manage, not making or letting them manage. Good performance cannot be compelled, commanded, or coerced.

**“Apply yourself. Get all the education you can, but then, by God, do something. Don’t just stand there, make something happen.”**

—Lee Lacocca

It is not so difficult: most professionals are self-motivated but intrinsic drive must be channeled skillfully to excite, engage, and energize. (Therefore, performance measurement must restrain demotivators, such as office politics, and build motivators, such as fairness, that make people strive to do the best they can.) In an environment of positive accountability, collaboration, truth telling, and learning would be rewarded, not just hitting all-too-often senseless targets.

**“How many cares one loses when one decides not to be something but to be someone.”**

—Coco Chanel

The better practices that Robert Behn recommends relate to creating the performance framework, driving performance improvement, and learning to enhance performance. Dialogue about measurement is what will turn data and information into knowledge. Right? Only then will you use performance indicators wisely. ■

<sup>15</sup> Individuals who are short of reaching a goal are more likely to engage in unethical behavior than others who do not have a goal or who exceed a goal. Also, individuals who are close to reaching a goal are more likely to engage in unethical behavior than others who are far from reaching a goal. This happens in all types of organizations.

<sup>16</sup> In a traditional pay-for-performance plan, a manager earns a bonus when performance reaches a certain level. The bonus increases with performance until it hits a maximum cap. When performance hits the cap, the manager has a strong incentive to push revenue and profit into the following year.

<sup>17</sup> Curvilinear pay-for-performance plans encourage managers to increase the variability of year-to-year performance measures.

<sup>18</sup> In a linear pay-for-performance plan, a manager enjoys the same bonus for a particular level of performance whether the budget goal happens to be set beneath the level or above it. This eliminates the incentive to game the process.

<sup>19</sup> Michael Jensen and William Meckling. 2009. Specific Knowledge and Divisional Performance Measurement. *Journal of Applied Corporate Finance*. 21 (2). pp. 49–57.

<sup>20</sup> Expense centers are the private sector equivalent of the classic public sector organization. A division organized as an expense center serves the rest of the organization. (Providers of internal administrative services, such as human resources, information systems and technology, and public relations, are commonly deemed to be expense centers.) However, the receiving units are not charged for the services they consume, hence, the tendency of expense centers to overproduce irrespective of demand, sometimes to maximize their sizes if only because compensation schedules tend to increase rewards for jobs with larger budgets and more personnel. Worse still, the receiving units have no incentives to compare the cost of the services they consume with the value of the services they receive.

<sup>21</sup> In the public sector, personnel must also follow so many processes that fidelity to these supplants devotion to results.

<sup>22</sup> See Robert Behn. 2006. *Performance Leadership: 11 Better Practices That Can Ratchet Up Performance*. IBM Center for the Business of Government. Available: [www.businessofgovernment.org/sites/default/files/performanceleadership.pdf](http://www.businessofgovernment.org/sites/default/files/performanceleadership.pdf)

## Box 1: One Approach to Performance Leadership—11 Better Practices That Can Ratchet Up Performance

### Creating the Performance Framework (What would it mean to do a better job?)

*Practice 1: Articulate the organization's mission:* proclaim—clearly and frequently—what the organization is trying to accomplish.

*Practice 2: Identify the organization's most consequential performance deficit:* determine what key failure is keeping the organization from achieving its mission.

*Practice 3: Establish a specific performance target:* specify what new level of success the organization needs to achieve next.

*Practice 4: Clarify your theoretical link between target and mission:* define (for yourself, at least) the mental model that explains how meeting the target will help accomplish the mission.

### Driving Performance Improvement (How can we mobilize our people?)

*Practice 5: Monitor and report progress frequently, personally, and publicly:* publish the data so that every team knows that you know (and that everyone else knows) how well every team is doing.

*Practice 6: Build operational capacity:* provide your teams with what they need to achieve their targets.

*Practice 7: Take advantage of small wins to reward success:* find lots of reasons to dramatize that you recognize and appreciate what teams have accomplished.

*Practice 8: Create "esteem opportunities":* ensure that people can earn a sense of accomplishment and thus gain both self-esteem and the esteem of their peers.

### Learning to Enhance Performance (How must we change to do even better?)

*Practice 9: Check for distortions and mission accomplishment:* verify that people are achieving their targets in a way that furthers the mission (not in a way that fails to help or actually undermines this effort).

*Practice 10: Analyze many and various indicators:* examine many forms of data—both quantitative and qualitative—to learn how your organization can improve.

*Practice 11: Adjust mission, target, theory, monitoring and reporting, operational capacity, rewards, esteem opportunities, and/or analysis:* act on this learning, making the modifications necessary to ratchet up performance again.

Source: Robert Behn. 2006. *Performance Leadership: 11 Better Practices That Can Ratchet Up Performance*. IBM Center for the Business of Government. Available: [www.businessofgovernment.org/sites/default/files/performanceleadership.pdf](http://www.businessofgovernment.org/sites/default/files/performanceleadership.pdf)

## Box 2: Will Your Organization Use Performance Indicators Wisely?

- Has your Board, Management, and staff discussed and agreed on what a quality product or service is, how the organization is to deliver it, and how it will know it has done so? Yes = 1, No = 0
- Will performance indicators be used as the judge of the organization's success or failure? Yes = 1, No = 0
- Will performance indicators be used as the basis for rewards to staff? Yes = 1, No = 0
- Will performance indicators be used as clues to asking questions about performance and its improvement? Yes = 1, No = 0
- Will the organization use performance indicators for each outcome of each key step in the product or service delivery process? Yes = 1, No = 0
- Will client, staff, Management, and Board perceptions be as important as performance indicators? Yes = 1, No = 0
- Will the funding body reward the organization for improving performance indicators? Yes = 1, No = 0
- Do you know how reliable your performance indicators are? Yes = 1, No = 0
- Do you know how valid your performance indicators are? Yes = 1, No = 0
- Could you convince a reasonable person that what you do causes what you are trying to achieve? Yes = 1, No = 0

Score: 1–3 = Do not use performance indicators: you will make things worse.

4–6 = Do not use performance indicators unless you come to a much better understanding of the issues.

7–9 = Do not use performance indicators yet; but there is a chance that you might leverage them wisely if your understanding of the issues improves.

10 = There is a good chance that you will use performance indicators wisely.

Source: Adapted from Paul Bullen. 1991. *Performance Indicators*. *Caring*. Association of Children's Welfare Agencies.



## FURTHER READING

- Robert Behn. 2003. Why Measure Performance? Different Purposes Require Different Measures. *Public Administration Review*. September–October. 63 (5). pp. 586–606.
- Michael Jensen. 2001. Corporate Budgeting Is Broken—Let’s Fix It. *Harvard Business Review*. 11. pp. 94–101.
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# Picking Investments in Knowledge Management

What can be measured is not necessarily important, and what is important cannot always be measured. When prioritizing investments in knowledge management, common traps lie waiting. They are delaying rewards for quick wins, using too many metrics, implementing metrics that are hard to control, and focusing on metrics that tear people away from business goals.



## THE LIMITATIONS OF TRADITIONAL METRICS

How can investments in knowledge management be picked? This is no easy matter. What can be measured is not necessarily important and what is important cannot always be measured. Not surprisingly, despite the wide implementation of knowledge management initiatives, a systematic and comprehensive assessment tool to prioritize investments in knowledge management in terms of return on investment is not available. This owes to the difficulty of demonstrating direct linkages between investments in knowledge management and organizational performance, most of which can only be inferred, and the fact that the miscellany of possible knowledge management initiatives calls for both quantitative and qualitative approaches. This is indeed the rationale behind the Balanced Scorecard introduced by Robert Kaplan and David Norton in 1992, whose qualities make it quite useful as a knowledge management metric.

## COMMON TRAPS

When prioritizing investments in knowledge management, common traps lie waiting. They are

- delaying rewards for quick wins,
- using too many metrics,
- implementing metrics that are hard to control, and
- focusing on metrics that tear people away from business goals.

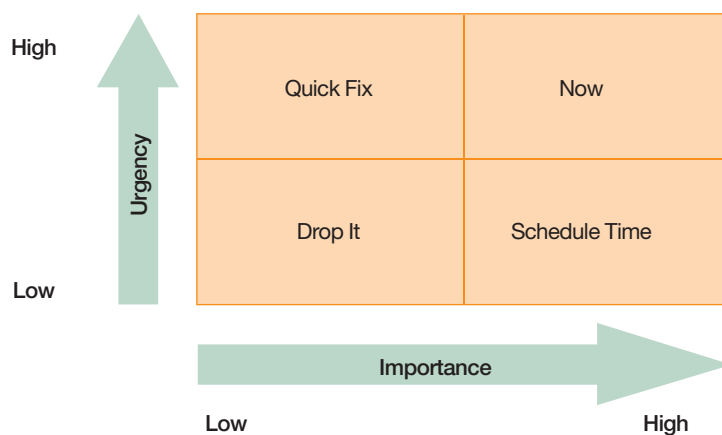
Until the state of the art is better developed, it is in the final analysis recommended to consider knowledge management initiatives as a portfolio of well-balanced investments.

## A PURPOSEFUL MEDLEY OF INSIGHTS

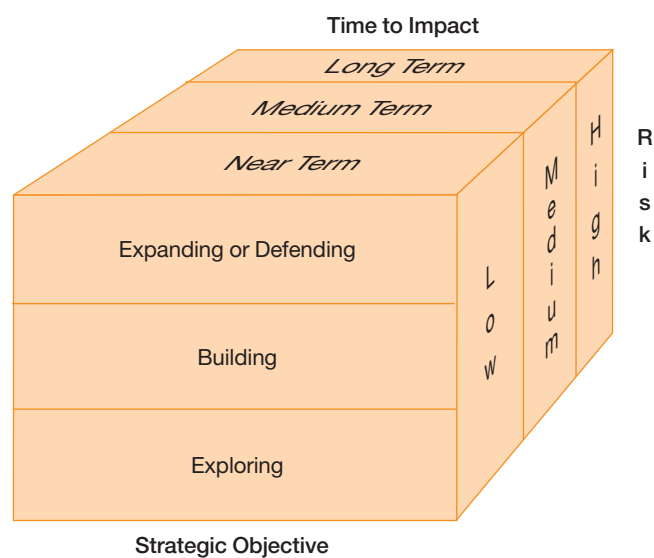
Figures 1–8 present a purposeful medley of insights that can help pick investments in knowledge management. They cover in turn

- a time management approach to full agendas that focuses on importance and urgency;
- generic features of a portfolio of knowledge management initiatives;
- ways to map knowledge management initiatives by knowledge agent, form of knowledge, and core knowledge activity;
- four broad aspects that sustain an innovative organization;
- five areas of value creation in knowledge products and services;
- ways to locate knowledge management initiatives in an options space;
- a multi-staged review process to underpin knowledge product and service development; and
- an approach to strategic management that balances the financial perspective.

In the spirit of learning, readers are invited to ponder the usefulness of each depending on context. ■

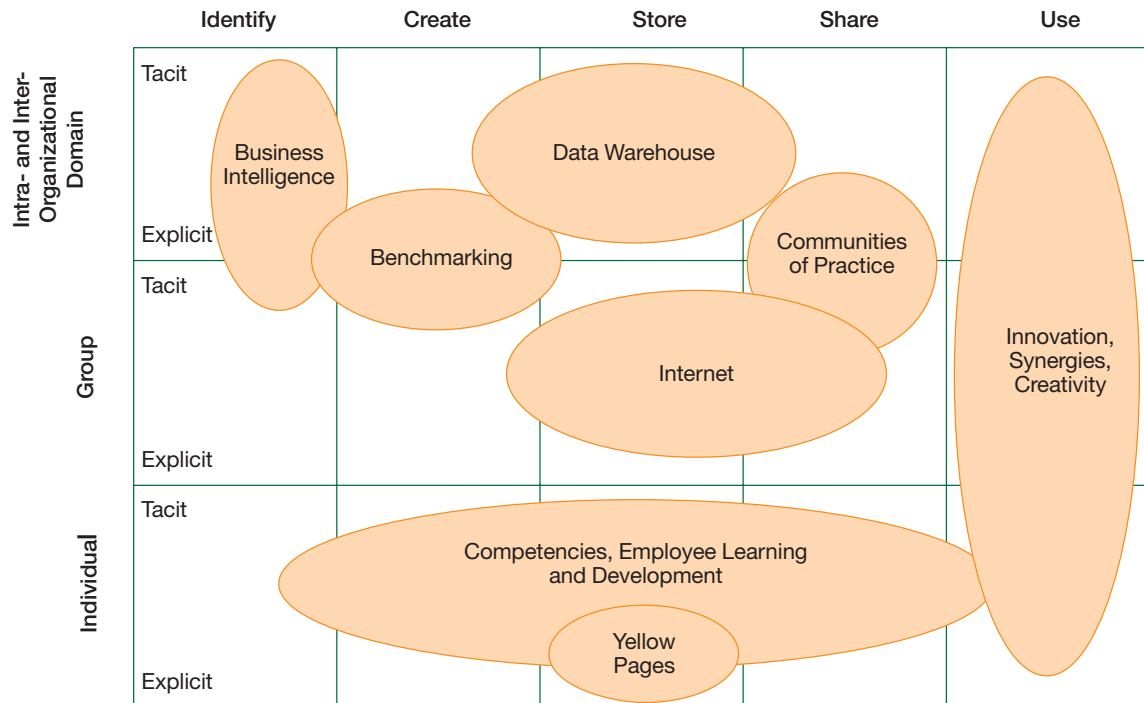
**Figure 1: Eisenhower Matrix**

Source: Stephen Covey. 1989. *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People: Restoring the Character Ethic*. Simon and Schuster.  
Note: Dwight Eisenhower is the originator of the matrix.

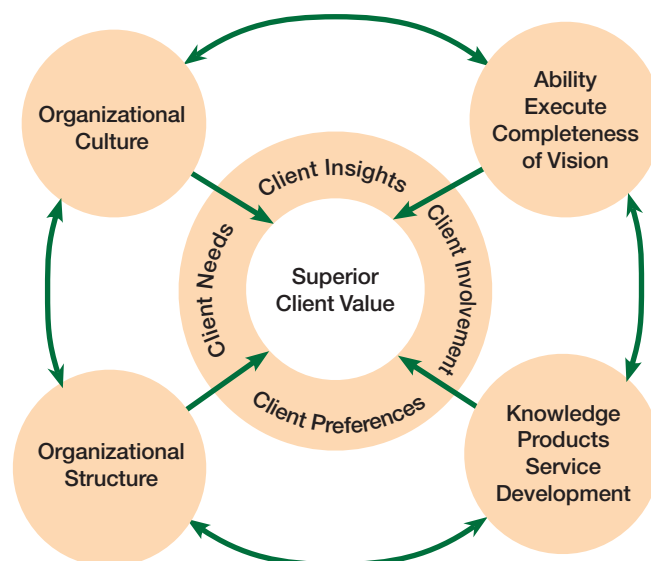
**Figure 2: Knowledge Management Investment Features**

Source: Adapted from Amrit Tiwana. 2000. *The Knowledge Management Toolkit: Orchestrating IT, Strategy, and Knowledge Platforms*. Prentice Hall.

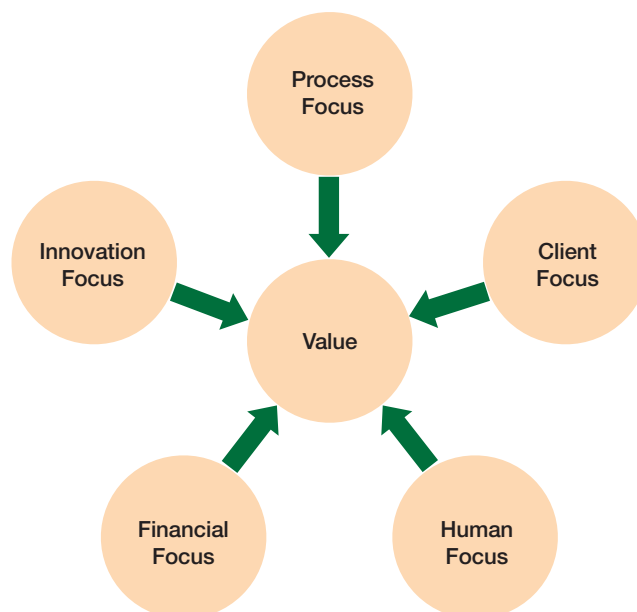


**Figure 3: Mapping Knowledge Management Investments**

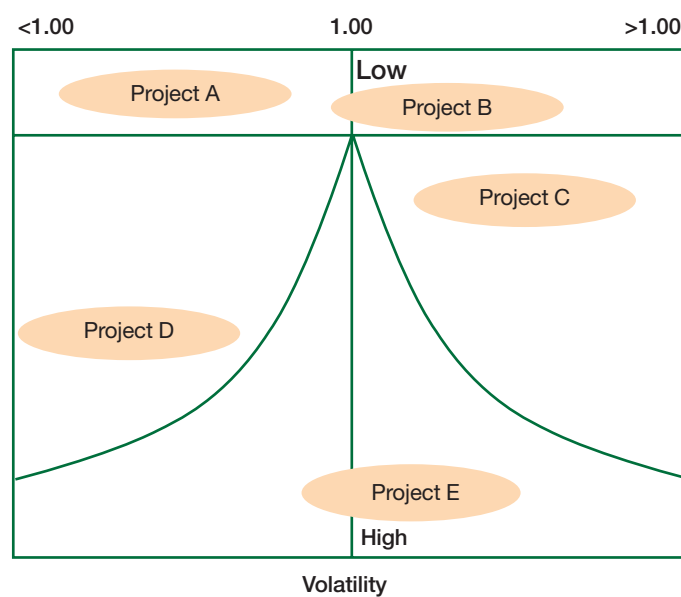
Source: Adapted from Charles Despres and Danièle Chauvel. 2000. How to Map Knowledge Management. In *Mastering Information Management*, edited by Donald Marchand and Thomas Davenport. Prentice Hall.

**Figure 4: Innovative Knowledge Product and Service Development**

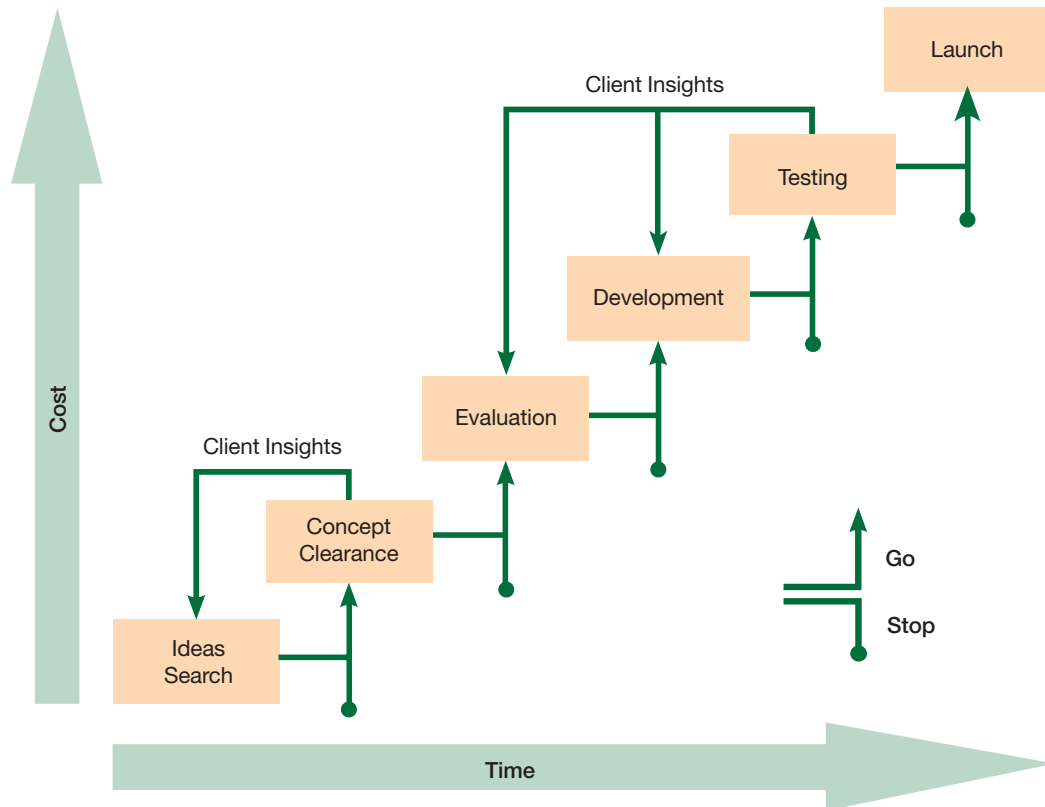
Source: Adapted from Simon Knox. 2002. The Boardroom Agenda: Developing the Innovative Organization. *Corporate Governance: International Journal of Business in Society*. 2 (1). pp. 27–36. Emerald Group Publishing Limited.

**Figure 5: Value Creation in Knowledge Products and Services**

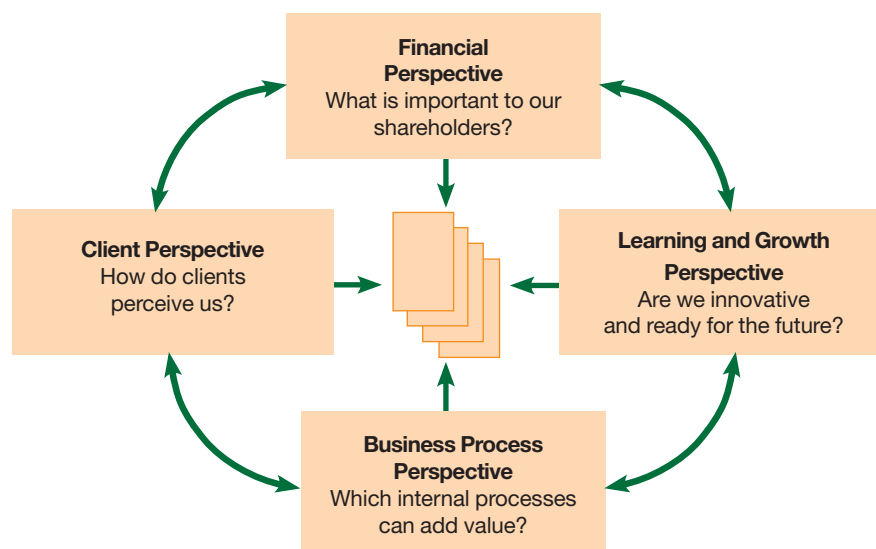
Source: Paul Iske and Willem Boersma. 2005. Connected Brains—Question and Answer Systems for Knowledge Sharing: Concepts, Implementation, and Return on Investment. *Journal of Knowledge Management*. 9 (1). pp. 126–145. Emerald Group Publishing Limited.

**Figure 6:**

Source: Adapted from Amrit Tiwana. 2000. *The Knowledge Management Toolkit: Orchestrating IT, Strategy, and Knowledge Platforms*. Prentice Hall.

**Figure 7: The Knowledge Product and Service Development Process**

Source: Adapted from Simon Knox. 2002. The Boardroom Agenda: Developing the Innovative Organization. *Corporate Governance: International Journal of Business in Society*, 2 (1), pp. 27–36. Emerald Group Publishing Limited.

**Figure 8: Balanced Scorecard**

Source: Robert Kaplan and David Norton. 1992. The Balanced Scorecard: Measures that Drive Performance. *Harvard Business Review*, January–February, pp. 71–80.



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# A Primer on Organizational Culture

Culture guides the way individuals and groups in an organization interact with one another and with parties outside it. It is the premier competitive advantage of high-performance organizations. Sadly, for others, organizational culture is the most difficult attribute to change: it outlives founders, leaders, managers, products, services, and well-nigh the rest. It is best improved by organizational learning for change.



## IN BRIEF

The principal competitive advantage of successful organizations is their culture. Its study is a major constituent of organizational development—that is, the process through which an organization develops its internal capacity to be the most effective it can be in its work and to sustain itself over the long term.

Organizational culture may have been forged by the founder; it may emerge over time as the organization faces challenges and obstacles; or it may be created deliberately by management.

## ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE DEFINED

Organizational culture comprises the attitudes, experiences, beliefs, and values of the organization, acquired through social learning, that control the way individuals and groups in the organization interact with one another and with parties outside it.

A standard typology refers to communal, networked, mercenary, and fragmented cultures. Numerous other typologies exist.<sup>1</sup> Nevertheless, the necessary notion to grasp is that organizational culture is determined by sundry factors that find expression in organizational structure, making structure itself an important culture-bearing mechanism.

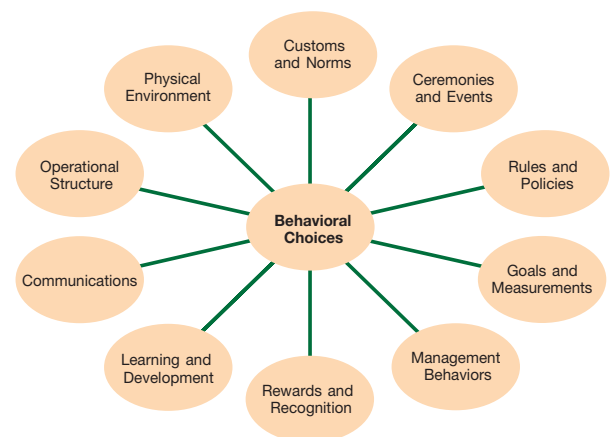
The figure delineates 10 components that, together, influence organizational culture. Importantly, identifying discernible elements of culture allows organizations to determine features that can be managed to help implement and sustain constructive organizational change. But just as none of the 10 components

in the figure shapes organizational culture on its own, none can individually support desired improvements.

## STRONG AND WEAK CULTURES

Organizational culture varies more than any other corporate asset, including large and tangible information and communication technology infrastructure. It is said to be strong where employees respond to stimuli because of their alignment with it. Conversely, it is said to be weak where there is little alignment, and control is exercised with administrative orders.

Figure: Components of Organizational Culture



Source: Author.

<sup>1</sup> One distinguishes coercive, utilitarian, and normative organizations. (To this, others add another dimension, namely, the professional or collegial organization.) Another focuses on how power and control are delegated, with organizations labeled as autocratic, paternalistic, consultative (else democratic), participative (else power sharing), delegative, or abdicate. A third classifies organizations according to their internal flexibility (viz., clans or hierarchies) and external outlook (viz., adhocracies or markets). The four cultures that Charles Handy popularized are power cultures (which concentrate power among a few), role cultures (which delegate authority within highly defined structures), task cultures (which form teams to solve particular problems), and people cultures (which allow individuals to think themselves superior to their organization).



## ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE AND CHANGE

Regardless, if an organization is to succeed and thrive, a knowledge culture must develop to help it deal with its external environment. But organizational culture is hard to change in the best circumstances. Employees need time to get used to new ways of organizing. Defensive routines pollute the system, more often than not unwittingly, and undermine it. The dynamics of culture change must be considered an evolutionary process at individual, group, organizational, and interorganizational levels, to be facilitated by psychologically attentive leaders who do not underestimate the value of selection, socialization, and leadership. People cannot share knowledge if they do not speak a common language. And so there is a serious, oft-ignored need to root learning in human resource policies and strategies.

## ORGANIZATIONAL LEARNING FOR CHANGE

Observers recognize a correlation between the orientation of organizational culture and organizational learning. Indeed, the inability to change organizational behavior is repeatedly cited as

**“The thing I have learned at IBM is that culture is everything.”**

—Lou Gerstner

the biggest hindrance to knowledge management. For this reason, even if the need to take a hard look at an organization's culture extends the time required to prepare knowledge management initiatives, the benefits from doing so are likely to tell.

Organizations that are more successful in implementing knowledge management initiatives embody both operations- and people-oriented attributes. Typically, a learning culture is an organizational environment that enables, encourages, values, rewards, and uses the learning of its members, both individually and collectively. But many cultural factors inhibit knowledge transfer. The table below lists the most common frictions and suggests ways to overcome them. Most importantly, when sharing knowledge, the method must always suit the culture as that affects how people think, feel, and act. ■

**“[Organizational culture is] A pattern of shared basic assumptions that the group learned as it solved its problems of external adaptation and internal integration, that has worked well enough to be considered valid and, therefore, to be taught to new members as the correct way you perceive, think, and feel in relation to those problems.”**

—Edgar Schein

**Table: The Culture of Knowledge Transfer**

Friction	Possible Solution
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of trust</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Build relationships and trust through face-to-face meetings.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Different cultures, vocabularies, frames of reference</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create common ground through education, discussion, publications, teaming, and job rotation.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of time and meeting places; narrow idea of productive work</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish times and places for knowledge transfers, e.g., fairs, talk rooms, and conference reports.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Status and rewards go to knowledge owners</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Evaluate performance and provide incentives based on sharing.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of absorptive capacity in recipients</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Educate employees for flexibility; provide time for learning; and hire for openness to ideas.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Belief that knowledge is the prerogative of particular groups; not-invented-here syndrome</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encourage nonhierarchical approach to knowledge; the quality of ideas is more important than the status of their source.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Intolerance of mistakes or need for help</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Accept and reward creative errors and collaboration; there is no loss of status from not knowing everything.</li> </ul>

Source: Thomas Davenport and Laurence Prusak. 2000. *Working Knowledge: How Organizations Manage What They Know*. Boston, Massachusetts: Harvard Business School Press.

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Edgar Schein. 1999. *The Corporate Culture Survival Guide*. John Wiley & Sons, Inc.



# A Primer on Organizational Learning

Organizational learning is the ability of an organization to gain insight and understanding from experience through experimentation, observation, analysis, and a willingness to examine successes and failures. There are two key notions: organizations learn through individuals who act as agents for them; at the same time, individual learning in organizations is facilitated or constrained by its learning system.



## IN BRIEF

A knowledge advantage is a sustainable advantage that provides increasing returns as it is used. However, building a knowledge position is a long-term enterprise that requires foresight and planning. To begin, one should grasp the fundamental, allied notions of organizational learning and the learning organization, which some contrast in terms of process versus structure.

## ON LEARNING ORGANIZATIONS

In the knowledge-based economies that emerged in the mid- to late 1990s, the organizations with the best chance to succeed and thrive are learning organizations that generate, communicate, and leverage their intellectual assets. In *The Fifth Discipline*, Peter Senge labels them “...organizations where people continually expand their capacity to create the results they truly desire, where new and expansive patterns of thinking are nurtured, where collective aspiration is set free, and where people are continually learning to see the whole together.”<sup>1</sup> He catalogues their attributes as personal mastery, shared vision, mental models, team learning, and systems thinking

(the fifth discipline that integrates the other four).<sup>2</sup> Command of these lets organizations add generative learning to adaptive learning.<sup>3</sup> Thus, they seldom make the same mistake twice. Organizational learning promotes organizational health.<sup>4</sup> As a result, organizational performance is high.<sup>5</sup> Referring further to Peter Senge, Figure 1 displays the core learning capabilities of organizations as a three-legged stool—a stool that would not stand if any of its three legs were missing. Figure 2 provides a matter-of-fact, multidisciplinary argument for why one might want to create a learning organization.

Other authors<sup>6</sup> see learning organizations in different ways and the search for a single, all-encompassing definition of the learning organization is attractive but frustrating. In the final analysis, the most useful description is likely to be that which each organization develops for itself. That should be

“ The most useful piece of learning for the uses of life is to unlearn what is untrue. ”

— Antisthenes

<sup>1</sup> Peter Senge. 1990. *The Fifth Discipline: The Art and Practice of the Learning Organization*. New York: Currency Doubleday.

<sup>2</sup> According to Peter Senge, personal mastery hangs on clarifying personal vision, focusing energy, and seeing reality. Shared vision is built by transforming personal vision into common vision. Mental models are put together by unearthing internal pictures and understanding how they shape actions. Team learning grows from suspending judgments and fostering dialogue. Systems thinking fuses the first four disciplines to create a whole from distinct parts.

<sup>3</sup> Generative learning concentrates on transformational change that changes the status quo. This type of learning uses feedback from past actions to interrogate the assumptions underlying current views. At heart, generative learning is about creating. Adaptive learning focuses on incremental change. That type of learning solves problems but ignores the question of why the problem arose in the first place. Adaptive learning is about coping.

<sup>4</sup> The notion of organizational ill health is easily understood and needs no explanation. As long ago as 1962, Warren Bennis identified three dimensions of it: (i) adaptability, (ii) coherence of identity, and (iii) the ability to perceive the world correctly. The point here is that organizational learning can provide a necessary and valuable contribution to organizational health by advancing the shared values, clarity of purpose, institutionalized leadership, technical capability, open and honest channels of communications, and ability to deal constructively with conflict. All are qualities that employees expect from their work nowadays.

<sup>5</sup> Organizational performance comprises the actual outputs or results of an organization as measured against its intentions. It is commonly examined in terms of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability. The forces that drive these are organizational context, organizational knowledge, inter- and intra-organizational relationships, and the external environment.

<sup>6</sup> Mike Pedler, John Burgoyne, and Tom Boydell. 1996. *The Learning Company. A Strategy for Sustainable Development*. London: McGraw-Hill. Pedler et al. argue that a learning company is an organization that facilitates the learning of all its members and consciously transforms itself and its context.

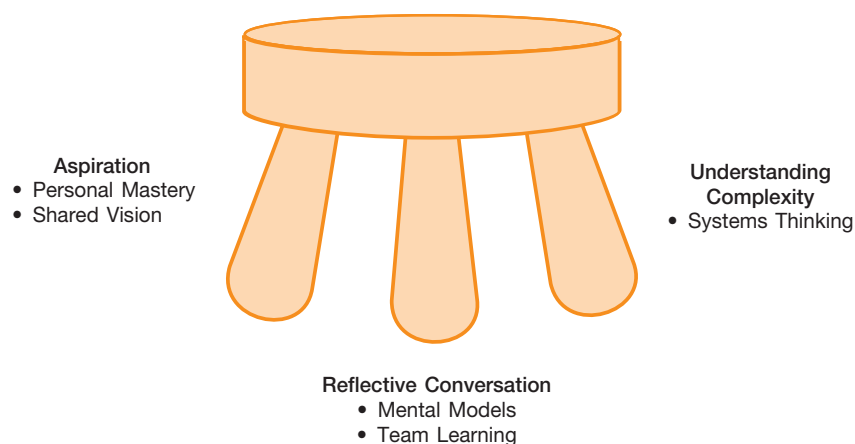




a well-grounded, easy-to-apply definition. Box 1 suggests an alternative way of looking at learning organizations, namely, by considering what their key characteristics might be. An important feature to bear in mind is that, for associated benefits

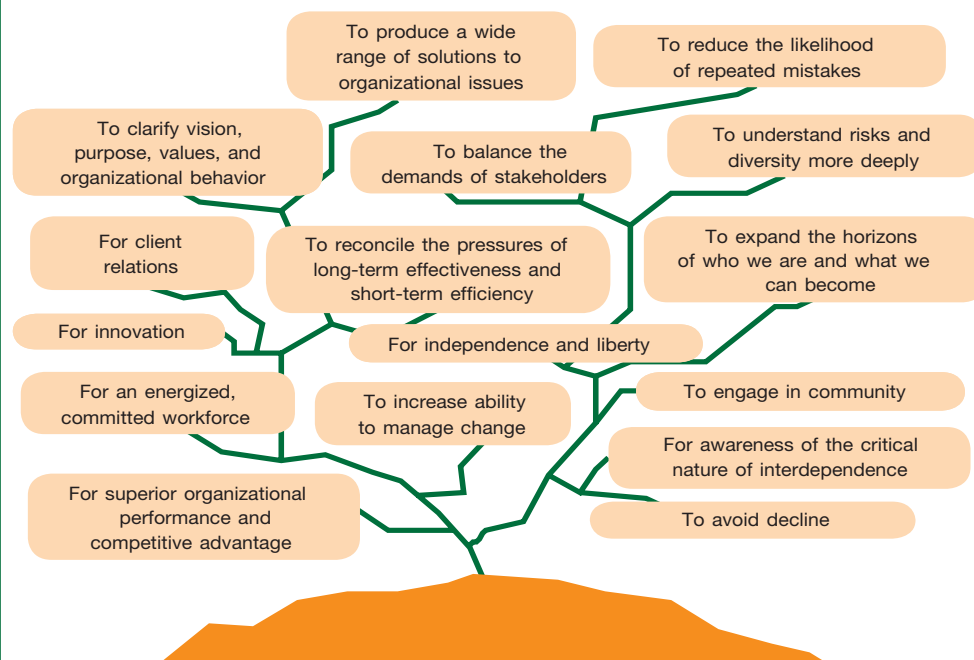
to arise, a learning organization must be organized at five, sometimes overlapping, levels: (i) individual learning,<sup>7</sup> (ii) team learning, (iii) cross-functional learning, (iv) operational learning, and (v) strategic learning.

**Figure 1: Core Learning Capabilities of Organizations**



Source: Adapted from Peter Senge. 1994. *The Fifth Discipline*. New York: Currency Doubleday.

**Figure 2: Why Create a Learning Organization?**



Source: Author.

<sup>7</sup> Individual learning is not covered in these *Knowledge Solutions*, even if it is the starting point of the learning organization and something that a learning organization should certainly encourage. Employees who are willing and able to learn new things are very important to an adapting organization. Without them, there will be no new products or services. There will be no growth. Specifically, learning organizations need skilled, enthusiastic, entrepreneurial, results-oriented, and improvement-minded individuals. To describe how individuals learn, David Kolb has framed a well-known experiential learning model: (i) doing, (ii) reflecting, (iii) connecting, and (iv) testing. Learning cycles can begin at any stage, depending on individual learning styles, but typically originate from doing. Reflective practitioners can choose to strengthen their ability at each stage to become all-round learners. Nevertheless, a learning organization is more than a collection of individuals who are learning—individual learning is a necessary but not a sufficient condition for organizational learning.

### Box 1: Characteristics of a Learning Organization

- People feel they're doing something that matters—to them personally and to the larger world.
- Every individual in the organization is somehow stretching, growing, or enhancing his or her capacity to create.
- People are more intelligent together than they are apart. If you want something really creative done, you ask a team to do it—instead of sending one person off to do it on his or her own.
- The organization continually becomes more aware of its underlying knowledge base—particularly the store of tacit, unarticulated knowledge in the hearts and minds of employees.
- Visions of the direction of the enterprise emerge from all levels. The responsibility of top management is to manage the process whereby new, emerging visions become shared visions.
- Employees are invited to learn what is going on at every level of the organization, so they can understand how their actions influence others.
- People feel free to inquire about each other's (and their own) assumptions and biases. There are few, if any, sacred cows or “undiscussable” subjects.
- People treat each other as colleagues. Mutual respect and trust are evident in the way they talk to each other and work together, no matter what their position may be.
- People feel free to try experiments, take risks, and openly assess the results. No one is censured for making a mistake.

Source: Adapted from Peter Senge, Art Kleiner, Charlotte Roberts, Richard Ross, and Bryan Smith. 1994. *The Fifth Discipline Fieldbook: Strategies and Tools for Building a Learning Organization*. New York: Currency Doubleday.

### ... AND ORGANIZATIONAL LEARNING

In the final analysis, other definitions of learning organizations share more with Peter Senge's than they disagree with, but it should not be assumed that any type of organization can be a learning organization. In a time of great change, only those with the requisite attributes will excel. Every person has the capacity to learn, but the organizational structures and systems in which each functions are not automatically conducive to reflection and engagement. There may be psychological and social barriers to learning and change. Or people may lack the knowledge management tools with which to make sense of the circumstances they face. In this sense, the learning organization is an ideal toward which organizations must evolve by creating the motive, means, and opportunities.<sup>8</sup>

The literature on learning organizations is oriented to action and geared to the use of strategies and tools to identify, promote, and evaluate the quality of learning processes. In contrast, that on organizational learning concentrates on the detached collection and analysis of the processes involved in individual and collective learning inside organizations. That is to say, organizational learning is the activity and the process by which organizations eventually reach the ideal of a learning organization. The dividing line between the two is the extent to which proponents emphasize organizational learning as a

technical or a social process. Figure 3 exemplifies single-loop and double-loop learning, the technical view expressed by Chris Argyris and Donald Schön.<sup>9</sup>

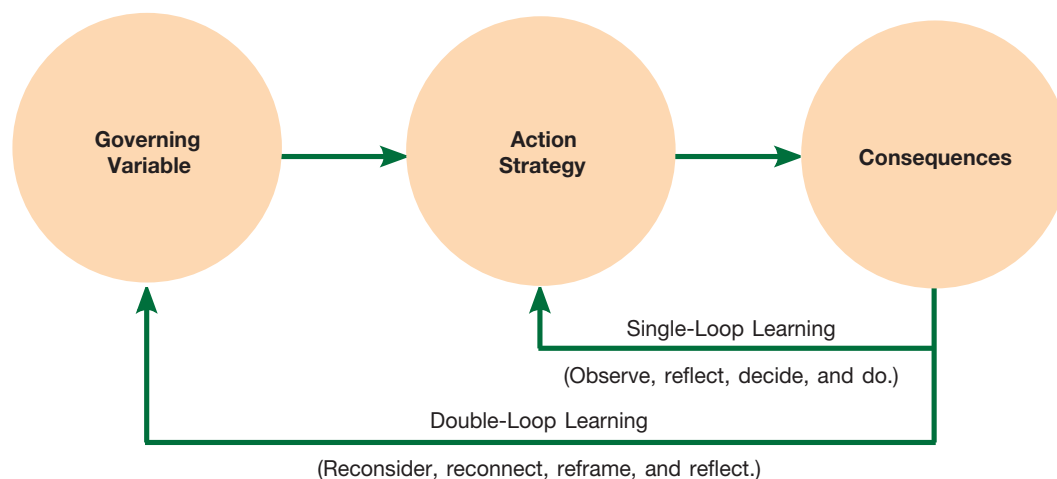
Jean Lave and Etienne Wenger think that learning is inherently a social process that cannot be separated from the context in which it takes place. They coined the term “community of practice” in 1991 based on their work on learning theory in the late 1980s and early 1990s (even if the phenomenon to which it refers is age old). Learning is in the relationships between people. Social learning occurs when persons who share an interest collaborate over time to exchange ideas, find solutions, and build innovations based on ability, not hierarchical position. Jean Lave and Etienne Wenger argue that communities of practice are everywhere and that we are generally involved in several of them—at work, school, or home, and even in our civic and leisure activities. We all are core members of some groups and at the margins of others. Naturally, the characteristics of communities of practice vary. But they can be defined along three dimensions: (i) what they are

**“Everybody who is incapable of learning has taken to teaching.”**

—Oscar Wilde

<sup>8</sup> A motive is a reason for doing something. Here, the motive is to understand learning and why it is important. The means are models, methods, competencies, and support. Opportunities are in the space made available for learning, with implications for prioritizing time.

<sup>9</sup> Single-loop learning asks a one-dimensional question to elicit a one-dimensional answer. Double-loop learning turns the question back on the questioner. It encourages people to be personally responsible for their action and inaction, and reveals information that can produce real change. Double-loop learning is potentially far-reaching and can lead to what has been termed triple-loop learning—challenging the principles and assumptions of an organization, which requires an open if not robust exchange of views. Pessimists argue that bureaucracy and learning are mutually exclusive because bureaucracies all too often subjugate initiatives to their operating routines and mindsets, even though mindsets themselves must change for learning to occur. This argument, if it holds, underscores the importance of the evaluation function in bureaucracy.

**Figure 3: Single-Loop and Double-Loop Learning**

Source: Adapted from Chris Argyris and Donald Schön. 1978. *Organizational Learning: A Theory of Action Perspective*. Reading, Massachusetts: Addison-Wesley.

about (their domain), (ii) how they function (their community), and (iii) what capabilities they produce (their practice).<sup>10</sup>

More recently, communities of practice have been associated with knowledge management as organizations recognize their potential contributions to human and social capital<sup>11</sup> as well as to organizational performance. Communities of practice can drive strategy, spawn new ideas for products and services, transfer good practice<sup>12</sup> and decrease the learning curve of new employees, respond more rapidly to specific client needs (requested or anticipated) for certain information, solve problems quickly, minimize organizational knowledge loss (both tacit and explicit), reduce rework and prevent “reinvention of the wheel,” develop professional skills, and help engage and retain talented individuals. Even with the help of community-

oriented technologies,<sup>13</sup> however, harnessing them in support of organizational development is not easy. Communities of practice benefit from cultivation, but their organic, spontaneous, and informal nature makes them resistant to supervision and interference. Importantly, knowledge and activity are intimately connected, and knowledge workers<sup>14</sup> have a strong need to feel that their work contributes to the whole. To get communities of practice going, leaders should (i) identify potential communities that will enhance the organization’s core competencies, (ii) provide supportive infrastructure, and (iii) use nontraditional methods to measure their value. In a learning organization, leaders are designers, stewards, and teachers.<sup>15</sup> Fundamentally, they should move from managing to enabling knowledge creation. Communities of practice are voluntary, and what will make them successful over time is their ability, within an enabling environment, to generate enough excitement, relevance, and value to attract, engage, and retain members. Depending on their maturity, communities of practice fall in one of two self-reproducing patterns of organizational performance, as illustrated in Figure 4. ■

**“I never teach my pupils; I only attempt to provide the conditions in which they can learn.”**

**—Albert Einstein**

<sup>10</sup> Etienne Wenger, Richard McDermott, and William Snyder. 2002. *Cultivating Communities of Practice: A Guide to Managing Knowledge*. Boston, Massachusetts: Harvard Business School Press.

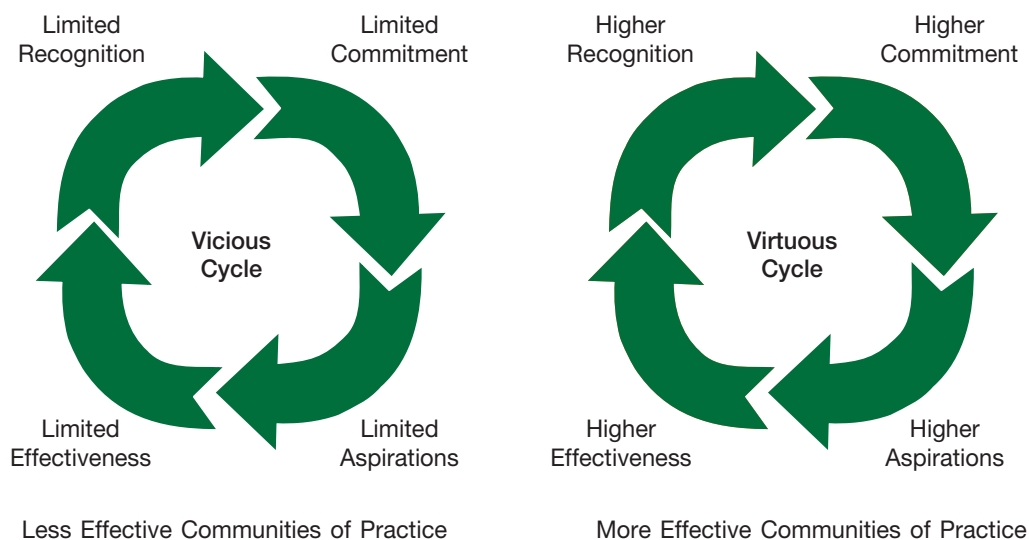
<sup>11</sup> Human capital refers to the stock of productive skills and technical knowledge embodied in labor. Social capital refers to connections within and between social networks.

<sup>12</sup> A good practice is defined as anything that has been tried and shown to work in some way—whether fully or in part but with at least some evidence of effectiveness—and that may have implications for practice at any level elsewhere. Three possible levels of good practice flow from this: (i) promising practices, (ii) demonstrated practices, and (iii) replicated practices.

<sup>13</sup> In a fast-changing market, numerous community-oriented technologies have emerged. They include (i) the desktop, with portal-like applications for managing participation in several groups; (ii) online project spaces for joint work; (iii) website communities; (iv) discussion groups; (v) synchronous meeting facilities, online auditoriums, conference rooms, and chat rooms; (vi) e-learning systems; (vii) expert profiles; and (viii) knowledge repositories. The advantages of one over another have to do with time and space, participation, membership, value creation, connections, and community development.

<sup>14</sup> The knowledge worker, a term coined by Peter Drucker back in 1959, is anyone who works for a living at the tasks of developing or using knowledge. See also ADB. 2008. *Managing Knowledge Workers*. Manila. Available: [www.adb.org/documents/information/knowledge-solutions/managing-knowledge-workers.pdf](http://www.adb.org/documents/information/knowledge-solutions/managing-knowledge-workers.pdf)

<sup>15</sup> Olivier Serrat. 2001. *Marry in Haste, Repent at Leisure*. Manila: ADB. Available: [www.adb.org/documents/periodicals/ero/2001/marry\\_in\\_haste.asp](http://www.adb.org/documents/periodicals/ero/2001/marry_in_haste.asp)

**Figure 4: Two Patterns of Organizational Performance for Communities of Practice**

Source: Nathaniel Foote. Linking Communities of Practice and Performance. Paper presented at the Communities of Practice Conference. San Diego, California, April 2000. Cited in Etienne Wenger, Richard McDermott, and William Snyder. 2002. *Cultivating Communities of Practice: A Guide to Managing Knowledge*. Boston, Massachusetts: Harvard Business School Press.

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## MANAGEMENT TECHNIQUES

Leadership is the process of working out the right things to do. Management is the process of doing things right.

# A Primer on Talent Management

**Talent is not a rare commodity—people are talented in many ways: it is simply rarely released. To make talent happen, organizations must give it strategic and holistic attention.**



## THE GENESIS OF TALENT MANAGEMENT

Globalization, the process by which economies, societies, and cultures are fast integrating through a globe-spanning network of communication and trade, drives both collaboration and competition. And so, in an age when those who possess knowledge<sup>1</sup>—not land, labor, or capital goods—own the new means of production, it is no surprise that a contest for talent has been raging since the 1990s. Better talent separates high-performance organizations from the rest. They bet on people, not strategies.

Critical talent is scarce (and about to become scarcer) because of three trends: the ongoing retirement of the “Baby Boom Generation,”<sup>2</sup> a widening skills gap,<sup>3</sup> and large-scale social integration<sup>4</sup> (driving rapidly changing lifestyles).

Talent management has become one of the most pressing topics in organizations (even if very few have strategies and operational programs in place with which to identify, recruit, develop, deploy, and retain the best). The competition for talent will define organizational milieus for a couple of decades to come. Springing from the three trends, several drivers fuel the emphasis:

- Workforce demographics are evolving.<sup>5</sup>
- The context in which organizations conduct their operations is increasingly complex and dynamic.<sup>6</sup>
- More efficient capital markets have enabled the rise of small and medium-sized organizations that offer opportunities few large organizations can match, exerting a pull across the talent spectrum.
- In knowledge economies, talent is a rapidly increasing source of value creation.
- A demonstrated correlation between talent and organizational performance exists: talented individuals drive a disproportionate share of organizational effectiveness. (Value creation extends beyond individual performance differentials.)
- Financial markets and boards of directors demand more.
- The mobility of personnel<sup>7</sup> is quickening on a par with changing expectations.<sup>8</sup> If talent is hard to find, it is becoming harder to keep.

In 1997, McKinsey and Company studied 77 large organizations from various industries to circumscribe the magnitude of the war for talent. They talked to the top

<sup>1</sup> In the information era, the value of hard assets has declined compared with the value of an organization’s intangible assets, e.g., reputation, name recognition, and intellectual property such as knowledge and know-how. Human capital, also known as talent, is the primary source of the intangible assets in organizations today.

<sup>2</sup> The “Baby Boom Generation” is a term that portrays those born in Asia, Australia, Europe, and North America after the Second World War, essentially between 1946 and 1955. They are now 55–64 years of age.

<sup>3</sup> A skills gap is a discrepancy between an organization’s current capabilities and the human capital it needs to achieve its goals. It is the point at which an organization may no longer grow or remain competitive because it cannot fill critical jobs with personnel that has the right knowledge, skills, and abilities.

<sup>4</sup> The large-scale social integration that constitutes modernity involves (i) faster movement of information, capital, goods, and people among formerly discrete populations, and consequent influence beyond the local area; (ii) sharper specialization of the segments of society, e.g., division of labor; and (iii) tighter formal social organization of mobile populations, development of circuits and networks on which they and their influence travel, and societal standardization conducive to socioeconomic mobility.

<sup>5</sup> For example, on top of the ongoing retirement of the “Baby Boom Generation” and certainly in the West, women are no longer joining the workforce en masse, white-collar productivity improvements have peaked, executives are not extending their careers, and immigration levels are stable (but might decline).

<sup>6</sup> Knowledge economies call for people with global acumen, multicultural ease, technological skills, entrepreneurial mindsets, and the ability to manage organizations that are increasingly delayed and disaggregated.

<sup>7</sup> One should perhaps now say partners and volunteers, not personnel or (even worse) employees.

<sup>8</sup> Rapidly changing lifestyles drive different expectations. Today, staff are more interested in having meaningful and challenging work. They are therefore more loyal to their profession than to the organization. It follows that they are less accommodating of traditional structures and authority and more concerned about work–life balance. Therefore, they are better prepared to take ownership of their careers and development.

200 executives in each company to appreciate why these executives worked where they did and how they had become the professionals they were. Organizations with winning employee value propositions had a compelling answer to the question, “Why would a talented person want to work here?” To create such a proposition, a great organization tailors its brand and products—that is, the jobs it has to offer—to appeal. It also pays the price it takes to recruit and retain talented people. The overall top 200 population cared deeply about values and culture, freedom and autonomy, challenging jobs, and good management. Differentiation was important to their compensation and lifestyle. In sum, their rewards were psychological, developmental, and financial. In 1973, Peter Drucker wrote: “Making a living is no longer enough. Work also has to make a life.”<sup>9</sup> Abraham Maslow had, 30 years earlier, conceptualized a theory of human motivation.<sup>10</sup>

## DISCOVERING TALENT MANAGEMENT

Talent management refers to the additional processes and opportunities that an organization makes available strategically to a pool of people who are deemed to have talent. If talent is

not identified and managed by the entire management team, not only the human resource management unit, talent may just as well be defined as a dormant or untapped quality to be accessed in the future, either in an individual or in the collective.

In point of fact, all organizations are equipped with a talent management system, be it by default or design—it is the people side of organizational design, usually entrusted to human resource management units. But a keyword here is “additional”: historically, organizations have concerned themselves almost exclusively with top executives, particularly their replacement and succession. (Senior leaders certainly constitute talent even if, more frequently in the public sector, they sometimes owe their jobs to political correctness or tenure.)<sup>11</sup> Another is “pool”: talent management demands that organizations move

**“My main job was developing talent. I was a gardener providing water and other nourishment to our top 750 people. Of course, I had to pull out some weeds, too.”**

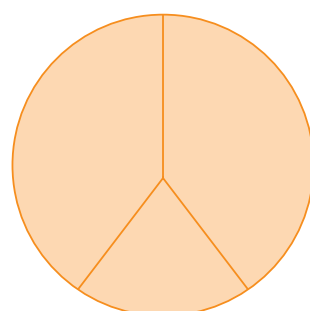
—Jack Welch

**Figure 1: What Motivates Talent?**

Percentage of Top 200 Executives Rating Factor Absolutely Essential

### Great Company (Brand)

Values and culture	58
Well managed	50
Company has exciting challenges	38
Strong performance	29
Industry leader	21
Many talented people	20
Good at development	17
Inspiring mission	16
Fun with colleagues	11
Job security	8



### Great Jobs (Products)

Freedom and autonomy	56
Job has exciting challenges	51
Career advancement and growth	39
Fit with boss I admire	29

### Compensation and Lifestyle (Price)

Differentiated compensation	29
High total compensation	23
Geographic location	19
Respect for lifestyle	14
Acceptable pace and stress	1

Source: Elizabeth Chambers, Mark Foulon, Helen Handfield-Jones, Steven Hankin, and Edward Michaels. 1998. The War for Talent. *McKinsey Quarterly*. No. 3.

<sup>9</sup> Peter Drucker. 1973. *Management: Tasks, Responsibilities, and Practices*. HarperCollins Publishers, Inc.

<sup>10</sup> As long ago as 1943, Abraham Maslow (1908–1970), an American psychologist, conceptualized a hierarchy of human needs. People have a basic desire to meet physiological needs, e.g., food, clothing, shelter. Next they seek safety, e.g., personal and financial security, and health and well-being. After physiological and safety requirements are fulfilled, they try to meet social needs, e.g., friendship, intimacy, and family. Next, all humans want to be respected and to have self-esteem and self-respect. Finally, at the top of the pyramid, is what Maslow called “self-actualization,” the aspiration to fulfill one’s self and become all that one is capable of becoming.

<sup>11</sup> Patronage is the control of appointments to jobs or the power to grant other political favors and the distribution of favors, jobs, and offices on a political basis. The word suggests the transgression of real or perceived boundaries of legitimate political influence and the violation of principles of merit and competition in recruitment and promotion. In the international public sector, many governments accept that some political appointments are legitimate and can help fashion a circle of managers sharing a common agenda. However, it is a problem when such appointments permeate systems and undermine merit and competition principles to the cost of organizational performance. Performance suffers when unqualified individuals are recruited or promoted into positions for which they are not suited. More detrimentally, morale is damaged as rank-and-file personnel witness their prospects for advancement based on merit and competition dim inexorably.

from replacement and succession planning to cater to the entire talent pool<sup>12</sup> with other processes and opportunities.<sup>13</sup> From a richer results chain perspective, talent management is also about recognizing and addressing the constant challenge to have the right people matched to the right jobs at the right time, and doing the right things. That is, talent management is about managing the demand, supply, and flow of talent across the organization through the human capital engine based on organizational strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. (The Develop-Deploy-Connect model helps generate capability, commitment, and alignment in talent pool segments.) The third related keyword is “strategic”: with respect to talent, it intimates that an organization, to maintain a sustainable competitive advantage, may wish to maximize organizational capabilities in certain competencies<sup>14</sup> and deemphasize others.

First, this requires that, having understood what motivates and drives talented people, organizations become management innovators and recognize that they do not need the same talent pool segments all the time (with implications for talent pool strategies, talent management systems, and talent management activities); second, it recognizes at long last that talent management can no longer be the province of human resource management units; third, it exposes the shortcomings of forced ranking<sup>15</sup> that many have excoriated as misguided, destructive, and outright antithetical to sound leadership.

Like all new fields, there will be strong returns to research. (Ten years after its birth, confusion or disagreement over the way talent management should be defined, operationalized, or supported are still rife.) Promising areas include the architecture of decisions for talent management,<sup>16</sup> talent pool strategies,<sup>17</sup>

**Figure 2: Talent Classified by Difficulty-to-Replace and Value Added**

Difficulty to Replace	Difficult to replace Low value added	Difficult to replace High value added
	Easy to replace Low value added	Easy to replace High value added
Value Added		

Source: Robert Lewis and Robert Heckman. 2006. Talent Management: A Critical Review. *Human Resource Management Review*. 16 (2). pp. 139–154. Adapted from Shoshana Zuboff. 1988. *In the Age of the Smart Machine: The Future of Work and Power*. Basic Books.

<sup>12</sup> In any organization, the existing talent pool comprises (i) senior leaders, (ii) those with leadership potential at mid-level, (iii) high performers, (iv) key contributors and technical experts, (v) those in roles critical to delivering the business strategy, (vi) those with skills in short supply and high demand, (vii) the entire workforce, and (viii) those with leadership potential at an entry level. Not surprisingly, given the historical preoccupation with replacement and succession planning, the segments that are viewed as most important to an organization follow the order in which they have just been listed. (Paradoxically, since voluntary resignation at the highest levels is typically low, most organizations do not consider senior leaders a high turnover risk. However, as if to confirm that talent is a critical issue facing organizations today, those with skills in short supply and high demand and high performers usually are, even if little is done about them.) Last but not least, the contents of the talent pools should be reviewed regularly but no finality should be ascribed.

<sup>13</sup> This does not mean that organizations should manage the talent in each person, however appealing the idea might be. That notion provides no guidance to determine what resources should be allocated to unearthing (and then perhaps grooming) individual talent.

<sup>14</sup> The *Knowledge Solutions* series couches a set of competencies in terms of strategy development, management techniques, collaboration mechanisms, knowledge sharing and learning, and knowledge capture and storage.

<sup>15</sup> Forced ranking is a management tool that relies on annual evaluations to locate an organization’s best and worst performing personnel, using person-to-person comparisons. To improve the quality of the workforce, managers typically rank personnel against one another into three categories: the top 20% are “A” players who are expected to lead the organization in the future; the middle 70% are “B” players who are encouraged to improve; the bottom 10% are “C” players who are either offered training, encouraged to move elsewhere, or dismissed. Where it works, forced ranking loses its effectiveness after a couple of years because the average quality of personnel increases (else, the exercise is proved a failure) and there are fewer “C” players to identify. Critics have argued that forced ranking engenders a pseudo-competitive environment conducive to patronage and yes-men; limited risk taking, creativity, and teamwork; as well as unethical (if not cutthroat) behavior that destroys trust in the workplace and depletes morale. It can also discourage workers from asking for help for fear they will be identified as low performers. Ironically, it can result in even good performers being cut if used on a yearly basis.

<sup>16</sup> For instance, the initial conditions and decisions that led to the adoption of forced ranking to improve the quality of the workforce are rarely examined. Yet, understanding these is central to interpreting linkages between related human resource management practices and their outcomes.

<sup>17</sup> For example, it might be worthwhile to develop systems-level models that illustrate the multi-pool impacts of talent choices in support of a strategy for sustainable competitive advantage.

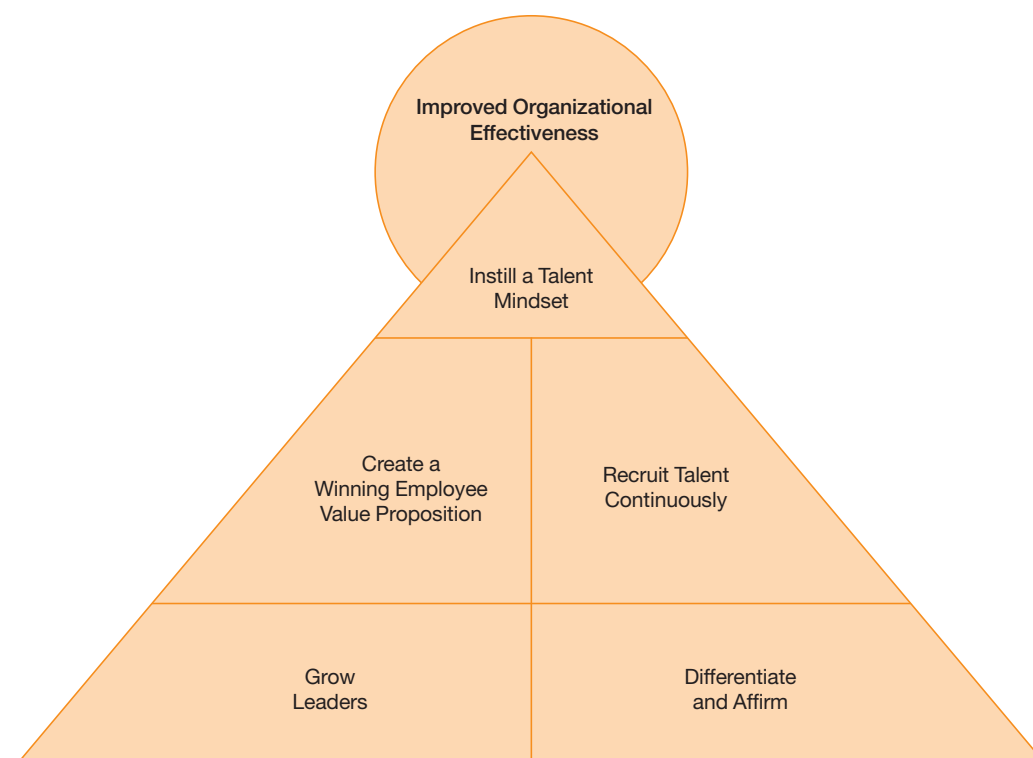


and the development of valid and reliable talent management measures.<sup>18</sup> Notwithstanding, the proactive, strategic nature of talent management opens new vistas. Across the world, it is agreed that human resource management can, indeed should, add more value to organizations. The best way to accomplish this is to become a business partner that directly improves organizational effectiveness.<sup>19</sup> Any organization needs a wide range of talents to succeed, not only those associated with senior leaders. If an organization recognizes clearly what work needs to be done and what competencies will deliver its strategy for sustainable competitive advantage, knows from talent mapping how best these can be identified and, where current and future gaps are, how they can be closed, numerous methods for managing talent can then be leveraged in support in more open and forward-looking fashion.<sup>20</sup>

### “UNDEFINING” TALENT

How talent is defined is specific to an organization. Explanations are highly influenced by markets, industries, organizations, geographies, intellectual disciplines, generations, and, of course, the nature of talent’s work. All are dynamic, and so likely to change over time according to organizational priorities. Rather than accepting universal or prescribed explanations, organizations will find greater value if they formulate their own definitions of what talent and talent management are. It is crucial for the meaning each gives to talent and its management to fit the organization’s exogenous and endogenous circumstances and particular needs. A language for talent management activities is a prerequisite to developing a coherent talent management strategy.

**Figure 3: Five Elements of a Talent Formula**



Source: Adapted from Elizabeth Axelrod, Helen Handfield-Jones, and Timothy Welsh. 2001. *The War on Talent, Part Two. McKinsey Quarterly*. No. 2.

<sup>18</sup> To labor the point, very few organizations bother to assess that forced ranking accurately identifies high performers. Elsewhere, there is no evidence that anything but the most cursory metrics, if any, feed the talent decisions managers make.

<sup>19</sup> The times are auspicious: as explained earlier, organizations are more and more dependent on their human capital for their competitive advantage. Since change is a constant, they also need more expertise in change management. Through the talent lens, human resource management can help with change management, influencing strategy and delivering a host of other value-added activities that impact organizational effectiveness.

<sup>20</sup> In declining (but not necessarily appropriate) frequency of use, formal methods typically include in-house development programs, coaching and mentoring, succession planning, cross-functional project assignments, high-potential development schemes, graduate development programs, courses at external institutions, internal secondments, assessment centers, 360-degree feedback, job rotation and shadowing, development centers, MBAs, action learning sets, and external secondments. Many of these can, and should, be applied to talent groups, not only individuals.



## FIVE ELEMENTS OF A TALENT FORMULA

In 2001, McKinsey and Company revisited their earlier study to structure a successful talent formula. Taking care to highlight the differences between the old way and the new, they identified that leading organizations execute against five talent management imperatives to

- Instill a talent mindset at all levels of the organization, beginning with senior leaders.
- Create a winning employee value proposition that brings scarce talent through the doors and keeps it there. The components of the proposition are exciting work, a great organization, wealth and reward, and growth and development.
- Recruit talent continuously.
- Grow leaders.
- Differentiate and affirm.

## STRATEGIC PERSPECTIVES

Given that different organizations aim to achieve different things from their talent management systems, while all seek to achieve some form of talent management, the five elements of a talent formula already look dated. More realistically and usefully, the Chartered Management Institute cautions that strategic perspective shapes the way in which the talent management system is viewed, implemented, and put into

operation, such that the same activity can result in a different action or outcome depending on the perspective employed. Crucially, the Chartered Management Institute remarks that an organization may shift its perspective over time in accordance with changes in the organization's strategy for sustainable competitive advantage, and indeed the development and embeddedness of the talent management system itself.

## TOWARD INTEGRATED TALENT MANAGEMENT?

The value of an integrated model for managing talent that links directly to improved organizational effectiveness is not lost on organizations. However, at this juncture, many note that an integrated approach is one of the most difficult of all talent management activities to implement, sustain, and enhance.<sup>21</sup> Next in line, in terms of difficulty, is creating more consistency in how talent is identified, developed, and moved throughout the organization. Third is giving senior leaders greater ownership of and accountability for the talent pipeline. Next, in diminishing order of difficulty, is focusing more on key workforce segments; redefining the critical attributes and competencies needed for the next generation of leaders; linking rewards more closely to performance; improving quality and use of analytics to monitor the need for, and supply of, talent and better differentiate performance; and scaling and adapting

**Table 1: Thinking about Talent Management**

	The Old Way	The New Way
Talent Mindset	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Having good people is one of many important performance levers.</li> <li>• Human resource management is responsible for people management including recruitment, compensation, performance reviews, and succession planning.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Having the right talent throughout the organization is a critical source of competitive advantage.</li> <li>• Support for talent management needs to flow from those at the very top. Every manager is responsible for attracting, developing, exciting, and retaining talented people. Every manager is explicitly accountable for the strength of the talent pool he or she builds.</li> </ul>
Employee Value Proposition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We expect people to pay their dues and work their way up the line before they get top jobs and higher salaries.</li> <li>• We have a strong value proposition that attracts potential employees.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We think of our people as partners and volunteers and know we have to try to deliver on their dreams now if we are to keep them.</li> <li>• We have a distinctive employee value proposition that attracts and retains talented people.</li> </ul>
Recruiting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recruitment is like purchasing; it is about picking the best from a long line of candidates.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recruitment is more like marketing and selling; it is a key responsibility of all managers.</li> </ul>
Growing Leaders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development is training.</li> <li>• Development happens when you are fortunate enough to have a good manager.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development happens through a series of challenging job experiences, and candid and helpful coaching and mentoring.</li> <li>• Development is crucial to performance and retention and it can be institutionalized.</li> </ul>
Differentiating and Affirming	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Differentiation undermines teamwork.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We shower our top performers with opportunities and recognition. We develop and nurture mid-performers. We help our lower performers raise their game or we move them out or aside.</li> </ul>

Source: Adapted from Elizabeth Axelrod, Helen Handfield-Jones, and Timothy Welsh. 2001. The War on Talent, Part Two. *McKinsey Quarterly*. No. 2.

<sup>21</sup> See Towers Watson. 2009. *Managing Talent in Tough Times: A Tipping Point for Talent Management*.

**Table 2: Strategic Perspectives on Talent Management**

Perspective	Core Belief	Recruitment and Selection	Retention	Succession Planning	Developmental Approach
Process	Include all processes to optimize people.	Competence based, consistent approach.	Good on processes such as work–life balance and intrinsic factors that make people feel they belong.	Routine review process based on performance review cycle.	Performance development plans and development reviews as part of performance management. Maybe some individual interventions.
Cultural	Belief that talent is needed for success.	Look for raw talent. Allow introductions from in-house.	Allow people the freedom to demonstrate their talent, and to succeed and fail.	Develop in-house if possible, if not look outside.	Individuals negotiate their own development paths. Coaching and mentoring are standard.
Competitive	Keep talent away from the competition.	Pay the best so you attract the best. Poach the best from the competition.	Good people like to work with good people. Aim to be employer of choice.	Geared toward retention—letting people know what their target jobs are.	Both planned and opportunistic approaches adopted. Coaches and mentors used to build loyalty.
Developmental	Accelerate the development of high potentials.	Ideally only recruit at entry point and then develop.	Clear development paths and schemes to lock high potentials into career paths.	Identified groups will be developed for each level of the organization.	Both planned and opportunistic.
Human Resource Planning	Right people in the right jobs at the right time.	Target areas of shortage across the company. Numbers and quotas approach.	Turnover expected, monitored, and accounted for in plans.	Detailed in-house mappings for individuals.	Planned in cycles according to business needs.
Change Management	Use talent management to instigate change in the organization.	Seek out mavericks and change agents to join the organization.	Projects and assignments keep change agents, but turnover of mainstay staff can occur.	Can be a bit opportunistic initially until change is embedded.	Change agents develop others who align with them and become the next generation of talent.
Area	Operational Dimension				
Defining	Size of talent pool, entry criteria, decision process, permanency of definition, recruitment as a source of talent, transparency				
Developing	Development path, development focus, support, influence on career, connected conversations, organizational values, risk				
Structures and Systems	Performance management, talent management processes, use of technology, systems flexibility, ownership of talent				

Source: Adapted from Eddie Blass. 2007. *Talent Management: Maximizing Talent for Business Performance*. Chartered Management Institute.

talent strategies on a global basis. Recognizing that these processes are necessary to succeed in the 21st century is the first, essential step.

## LEADING MAVERICKS

Inevitably, any discussion of talent management brings a focus to bear on mavericks. They are the handful of very clever, willfully independent, and highly creative individuals, often evangelistic believers, who produce remarkable results on

their own.<sup>22</sup> If organizations are finding it difficult to retain top talent, they are finding it almost impossible to maintain productive relationships with mavericks. But mavericks do not necessarily walk away. Contrary to common belief, they need the organization in the same measure that it needs them. (They cannot operate without the systems and resources it makes available.) Managers should be aware of the attributes that mavericks share. (Their one defining characteristic is that they do not want to be “led.”) But the art of leading mavericks

<sup>22</sup> Mavericks know their self-worth and will not readily offer thanks for help. They are organizationally astute and well connected, which leads them to downplay hierarchy and demand instant access. Their high creativity is the flip side of their low boredom threshold.



can be one of the most rewarding skills one can develop for an organization. A few tips follow:

- Understand the multiple motivations and diverging expectations of mavericks: turn their frustrations into satisfaction by actively enabling their talents to find outlets.
- Do not take mavericks for granted: they do not stand still and it pays to grant them attention with productive talk.<sup>23</sup>
- Inspire talent to stay by being personally courageous.
- Be generous: advertise the talent of mavericks to others.
- Expect that mavericks will outgrow you and help them to do so. ■

## FURTHER READING

- Robert Lewis and Robert Heckman. 2006. *Talent Management: A Critical Review. Human Resource Management Review*. 16 (2). pp. 139–154.
- Kaye Thorne and Andy Pellant. 2007. *The Essential Guide to Managing Talent: How Top Companies Recruit, Train, and Retain the Best Employees*. Kogan Page Limited.

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<sup>23</sup> Kaye Thorne and Andy Pellant have proposed a useful competency-based development plan for talent: (i) generates novel ideas, avoids early conclusions; (ii) identifies and explores wider, less obvious options in a situation; (iii) is intrigued by new concepts and leverages them to gain business advantage; (iv) develops further, implements, and embeds new ideas, processes, or products; (v) takes calculated risks; (vi) offers independent ideas, challenges the status quo; and (vii) turns creative ideas into effective business solutions. See Kaye Thorne and Andy Pellant. 2007. *The Essential Guide to Managing Talent: How Top Companies Recruit, Train, and Retain the Best Employees*. Kogan Page Limited.





# The Reframing Matrix

Everyone sees things differently—knowledge often lies in the eye of the beholder. The reframing matrix enables different perspectives to be generated and used in management processes. It expands the number of options for solving a problem.



## RATIONALE

Perspective is a mental view, an ingrained way of perceiving the world. Different people have different experiences and see in different ways: understanding how they do expands the range of solutions that one might devise to address a question or problem.

## DEFINITION

The reframing matrix is a simple technique that helps examine problems from distinct viewpoints. In other words, individuals or groups place themselves in the mindsets of different people and imagine what solutions the latter might come up with. The reframing matrix was devised by Michael Morgan.

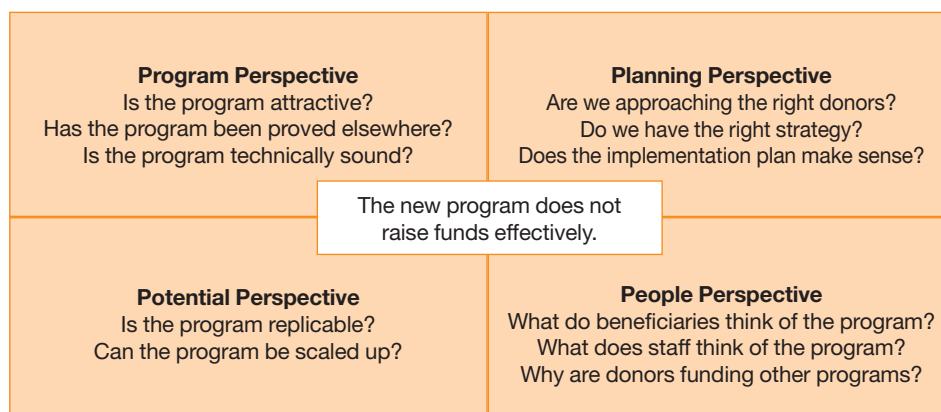
## PROCESS

The reframing matrix lays a question (or problem) in the middle of a four-box grid. It is then examined from four typical business perspectives:

- **Program Perspective:** Are there issues with the program (or product or service) we are delivering?
- **Planning Perspective:** Is the business (or communications plan) appropriate?
- **Potential Perspective:** Is the program replicable? Can it be scaled up?
- **People Perspective:** What do the people involved think?

The figure below offers one example of the so-called Four Ps Approach, with illustrative questions aimed at a new program that is not raising funds effectively.

**Figure: The New Program Does Not Raise Funds Effectively**



Source: Adapted from Ben Ramalingam. 2006. *Tools for Knowledge and Learning: A Guide for Development and Humanitarian Organizations*. Overseas Development Institute. Available: [www.odi.org.uk/rapid/publications/documents/km\\_toolkit\\_web.pdf](http://www.odi.org.uk/rapid/publications/documents/km_toolkit_web.pdf)



Then again, the four-box grid can be used to consider a question (or problem) from the perspectives of different groups of stakeholders, e.g., staff, clients, suppliers, and partners, or specialists, e.g., engineers, lawyers, economists,

or information technology specialists. The table below shows how one might figure out the potential perspectives of internal and external stakeholders in the context of a development agency. ■

**Table: Stakeholder Perspectives**

Headquarters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Director General</li><li>• Director</li><li>• Program/project officer</li><li>• Counsel</li><li>• Cofinancing officer</li><li>• Control officer</li><li>• Procurement specialist</li><li>• Evaluation specialist</li></ul>	How would each stakeholder perceive the question (or problem)?  What would each stakeholder see as benefits and drawbacks?  What might each stakeholder see as potential benefits and drawbacks?
Field office	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Project manager</li><li>• International consultant</li><li>• National counterpart</li></ul>	What solutions might each stakeholder offer?
Beneficiaries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Farmers/fishers</li><li>• Women</li><li>• Children and youth</li><li>• Ethnic minorities</li><li>• Local authorities</li></ul>	How relevant is each stakeholder to the situation at hand?
Partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Executing agency</li><li>• Implementation support agencies</li><li>• Civil society</li><li>• Financing agency</li></ul>	

Source: Adapted from Ben Ramalingam. 2006. *Tools for Knowledge and Learning: A Guide for Development and Humanitarian Organizations*. Overseas Development Institute. Available: [www.odl.org.uk/rapid/publications/documents/km\\_toolkit\\_web.pdf](http://www.odl.org.uk/rapid/publications/documents/km_toolkit_web.pdf)

## FURTHER READING

Michael Morgan. 1993. *Creating Workforce Innovation: Turning Individual Creativity into Organizational Innovation*. Allen & Unwin.





# The Roots of an Emerging Discipline

**Organizations must become information based: (i) knowledge workers are not amenable to command and control; (ii) in the face of unremitting competition, it is vital to systematize innovation and entrepreneurship; (iii) in a knowledge-based economy, it is imperative to decide what information one needs to conduct one's affairs.**



## PREAMBLE

Knowledge is the result of learning and the process of identifying, creating, storing, sharing, and using it to enhance performance has always occupied man. The pursuit of any human activity leads to the acquisition by those involved of know-how about how that activity may be successfully conducted and, insofar as what is learned can be harnessed, subsequent practitioners—even later generations—can build on experience and avert costly rework. Even so, for much of history, applications of know-how were confined to farming and craftsmanship.

## BACKGROUND

The Industrial Revolution that took place in Britain in the late 18th century, spread to Western Europe and North America in the 19th century, and eventually affected the rest of the world replaced economies based on manual labor with economies dominated by machine tools. Beginning with the mechanization of textile manufacturing, fast-paced technological progress in other industries from the mid-19th century continued into the early 20th century and sparked unprecedented socioeconomic changes. The First World War spread new technology even wider and shaped the modern world. It also laid the seeds of the Second World War, another high point of technological escalation.

In post-industrial economies—a term associated from the 1970s with a phase when the relative importance of manufacturing decreases and that of services and information grows—those who possess knowledge—not land, labor, or capital goods—own the new means of production. Accepting great variations within and across countries, changes from industrial to knowledge economies have since been quickened by the complex series of economic, social, technological, cultural, environmental, and political changes that followed the Second World War. Their practical expression, referred to as

globalization, is seen as increasing interdependence, integration, and interaction between people in far-flung locations.

Knowledge has always been transferred in one form or another. In varying forms of complexity, this has been accomplished by imitation; storytelling; written symbols and letters; apprenticeships; primary, secondary, and tertiary schooling; on-the-job discussions with peers; maintenance of corporate libraries; and professional training and coaching and mentoring programs, among others. However, from the early 1980s, expanding technologies for distribution of data and information opened opportunities for the development of a fertile environment enabling knowledge to be identified, created, stored, shared, and used for benefit.

## THE PRESENT

In the knowledge-based economies that emerged in the mid- to late 1990s, information moves everywhere and its effects are pervasive. Irrespective of their nature, actors must organize themselves around information. There are three reasons why large organizations—a form of social institution involved in business (or more recently nonprofit) activities that developed from the late 1860s and is now prevalent—must become information based. The first is that knowledge workers, who increasingly make up workforces, are not amenable to the command-and-control methods of the past. (In a knowledge workforce, the system must serve the worker.) The second, in the face of unremitting competition, is the requirement to systematize innovation and entrepreneurship, this being quintessentially knowledge work. (The implementation of

**“An investment in knowledge pays the best interest.”**

— Benjamin Franklin



**Table: Organization and Culture**

	Feudal Culture	Industrial Culture	Knowledge Culture	Creativity Culture
Organization	Territorial	Hierarchies	Networks	Flows
Focus	Land	Profit	Customer	Innovation
Culture	Domination Control	Control Responsibility	Responsibility Contribution	Contribution Creativity
Key Measure	Quantity	Efficiency	Effectiveness	Quality of Life

Source: Author.

**Box: Old and New Knowledge Management Paradigms****Old Paradigm**

- Organizational discipline
- Vicious circles
- Inflexible organizations
- Management administrators
- Distorted communication
- Strategic business units drive product development
- Strategic learning occurs at the apex of the organization
- Assumption that most employees are untrustworthy
- Most employees are disempowered
- Tacit knowledge of most employees must be disciplined by managerial prerogative

**New Paradigm**

- Organizational learning
- Virtuous circles
- Flexible organizations
- Management leaders
- Open communication
- Core competencies drive product development
- Strategic learning capacities are widespread
- Assumption that most employees are trustworthy
- Most employees are empowered
- Tacit knowledge of employees is the most important factor in success, and creativity creates its own prerogative

Source: Adapted from Stewart Clegg et al. 1996. Management Knowledge for the Future: Innovation, Embryos, and New Paradigms. In Stewart Clegg and Gill Palmer, eds. *The Politics of Management Knowledge*. London: Sage.

knowledge management processes, systems, and applications has been shown to improve efficiency, forestall knowledge loss, and stimulate knowledge growth and creation.) The third is the imperative to come to terms with information technology: in a knowledge-based economy, an organization must decide what information it needs to conduct its affairs; if not, it will drown in data. (Typically, staff spend about 30% of their time looking for information.)

**“Knowing is not enough; we must apply. Willing is not enough; we must do.”**

— Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

**PROSPECTS**

The forces of technology, globalization, and the emerging knowledge-based economy are sparking yet another revolution that is forcing large numbers of people and their organizations

to seek new ways to manage themselves. Those tasked with leading must operate under the principle that the unique knowledge that knowledge workers bring to work is the key competitive differentiator. Still, the transfer of knowledge is inherently difficult even with modern knowledge management tools. Those who possess knowledge are not necessarily aware of all the potential applications of what they know. Knowledge is also “sticky” and tends to remain in people’s heads. And so, organizing for knowledge management requires new structures and managerial attitudes. ■

**FURTHER READING**

- ADB. 2007. *Learning Lessons in ADB*. Manila. Available: [www.adb.org/documents/reports/learning-lessons-adb/strategic-framework-2007-2009.asp](http://www.adb.org/documents/reports/learning-lessons-adb/strategic-framework-2007-2009.asp)
- . 2009. *Learning for Change in ADB*. Manila. Available: [www.adb.org/documents/books/learning-for-change/default.asp](http://www.adb.org/documents/books/learning-for-change/default.asp)

**MANAGEMENT TECHNIQUES**

Leadership is the process of working out the right things to do. Management is the process of doing things right.



# The SCAMPER Technique

Ideas are not often plucked out of thin air. The SCAMPER brainstorming technique uses a set of directed questions to resolve a problem (or meet an opportunity). It can also turn a tired idea into something new and different.



## RATIONALE

A problem is a situation, condition, or issue that remains unresolved and makes it difficult to accomplish a desired objective. It is recognized as such when an individual, group, or organization becomes aware of a significant difference between what is desired and what actually is. Trying to find a solution to a problem is known as problem solving.

Problem solving is the process by which a situation is analyzed, a workable solution is determined, and corrective action is taken. The common milestones of problem solving are to

- Define (or clarify) the problem.
- Analyze causes.
- Generate ideas (identify alternatives).
- Weigh up ideas (assess alternatives).
- Make a decision (select an alternative).
- Determine next steps to implement the solution.
- Evaluate whether the problem was solved or not.

## THE SCAMPER TECHNIQUE

Every problem invites a solution and, needless to say, problem-solving techniques are numerous.<sup>1</sup> The SCAMPER technique, for one, uses a set of directed, idea-spurring questions to suggest

some addition to, or modification of, something that already exists.<sup>2</sup> It has also received much attention as a learning tool that fosters awareness, drive, fluency, flexibility, and originality. The stimulus comes from being asked to answer queries that one would not normally pose. The changes that SCAMPER stands for are

- S—Substitute (e.g., components, materials, people)
- C—Combine (e.g., mix, combine with other assemblies or services, integrate)
- A—Adapt (e.g., alter, change function, use part of another element)
- M—Magnify/Modify (e.g., increase or reduce in scale, change shape, modify attributes)
- P—Put to other uses
- E—Eliminate (e.g., remove elements, simplify, reduce to core functionality)
- R—Rearrange/Reverse (e.g., turn inside out or upside down)

## CAVEAT

The SCAMPER technique is used to produce original ideas. The creative process thrives on preparation, concentration, incubation, illumination, and verification. In organizations, its

<sup>1</sup> They include Affinity Diagrams (organizing ideas into common themes); the Ansoff Matrix (understanding the different risks of different options); Appreciation (extracting maximum information from facts); Appreciative Inquiry (solving problems by looking at what is going right); the Boston Matrix (focusing effort to give the greatest returns); Brainstorming (generating a large number of ideas to solve a problem); Cause-and-Effect Diagrams (identifying the possible causes of problems); Core Competence Analysis (get ahead, stay ahead); Critical Success Factors (identifying the things that really matter for success); the Five Whys Technique (quickly getting to the root of a problem); Flowcharts (understanding how a process works); the Greiner Curve (surviving the crises that come with growth); Lateral Thinking (changing concepts and perception); the Marketing Mix and the 4 Ps (understanding how to position a market offering); the McKinsey 7Ss (making sure that all the parts of an organization work in harmony); PEST (Political, Economic, Sociocultural, and Technological) Analysis (understanding the big picture); Porter's Five Forces (understanding where power lies); the Reframing Matrix (examining problems from distinct viewpoints); Risk Analysis; Systems Diagrams (understanding the way factors affect one another); Root Cause Analysis (identifying the root causes of problems or events); SWOT Analysis (analyzing strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats); and USP (Unique Selling Propositions) Analysis (crafting competitive edge).

<sup>2</sup> The principles of the SCAMPER technique were first formally suggested by Alex Osborn and later arranged by Bob Eberle as a mnemonic in 1991 to increase interest in the perceptive, imaginative, and creative abilities of children.



## Help Guide to the SCAMPER Technique<sup>3</sup>

<b>Substitute</b>	Think about substituting part of the product or process for something else.  Typical questions: What else instead? Who else instead? What other materials, ingredients, processes, power, sounds, approaches, or forces might I substitute? Which other place?
<b>Combine</b>	Think about combining two or more parts of the product or process to make something new or to enhance synergy.  Typical questions: What mix, assortment, alloy, or ensemble might I blend? What ideas, purposes, units, or appeals might I combine?
<b>Adapt</b>	Think about which parts of the product or process could be adapted or how you might change the nature of the product or process.  Typical questions: Does the past offer a parallel? What else is like this? What other idea does this suggest? What might I adapt for use as a solution? What might I copy? Who might I emulate?
<b>Magnify, Modify</b>	Think about changing part or all of the product or process, or distorting it in an unusual way.  Typical questions: What other meaning, color, motion, sound, smell, form, or shape might I adopt? What might I add?
<b>Put to Other Uses</b>	Think of how you might put the product or process to another use or how you might reuse something from somewhere else.  Typical questions: What new ways are there to use this? Might this be used in other places? Which other people might I reach? To what other uses might this be put if it is modified?
<b>Eliminate</b>	Think of what might happen if you eliminated parts of the product or process and consider what you might do in that situation.  Typical questions: What might I understate? What might I eliminate? What might I streamline? What might I make smaller, lower, shorter, or lighter?
<b>Rearrange, Reverse</b>	Think of what you might do if parts of the product or process worked in reverse or were sequenced differently.  Typical questions: What might be rearranged? What other pattern, layout, or sequence might I adopt? Can components be interchanged? Should I change pace or schedule? Can positives and negatives be swapped? Could roles be reversed?

Source: Litemind. 2009. *Creative Problem Solving with SCAMPER*. Available <http://litemind.com/scamper/>

fruitful application depends on the existence of an enabling environment. Of course, personal blocks<sup>4</sup> to creativity exist but these can often be overcome. Supervisors who foster creativity listen, are willing to absorb the risks borne by their subordinates, are comfortable with half-developed ideas, do not dwell on past mistakes, expect subordinates to succeed, capitalize on the strengths of subordinates, enjoy their jobs, and

make quick decisions. They must then help sell ideas to senior management. This involves assessing the “sellability” of ideas<sup>5</sup> and developing persuasive arguments.<sup>6</sup> ■

## FURTHER READING

Litemind. 2009. *Creative Problem Solving with SCAMPER*. Available: <http://litemind.com/scamper/>

<sup>3</sup> Litemind’s blog on *Creative Problem Solving with SCAMPER* (available: <http://litemind.com/scamper/>) suggests more than 60 questions that can be asked, along with almost 200 words and expressions one can create associations with.

<sup>4</sup> I do not want to look foolish. I do not want to fail. I am not creative. This is not my area (e.g., skill, style, job, etc.). I am not paid to have fun!

<sup>5</sup> Will the idea work? Will people accept it? Is it timely?

<sup>6</sup> This requires that the proponents relate the idea to a recognized need, appeal to positive values, anticipate objections, get others involved, and advertise their credibility.



# Seeding Knowledge Solutions Before, During, and After

In the age of competence, one must learn before, during, and after the event. Knowledge solutions lie in the areas of strategy development, management techniques, collaboration mechanisms, knowledge sharing and learning, and knowledge capture and storage.



## THE AGE OF COMPETENCE

Competence is the state or quality of being adequately or well qualified to deliver a specific task, action, or function successfully. It is also a specific range of knowledge, skills, or behaviors utilized to improve performance.



Today, sustainable competitive advantage derives from strenuous efforts to identify, cultivate, and exploit an organization's core competencies,<sup>1</sup> the tangible fruits of which are composite packages of products and services that anticipate and meet demand. (Yesteryear, instead of strengthening the roots of competitiveness, the accent was placed on business

units. Innately, given their defining characteristics, business units underinvest in core competencies, incarcerate resources, and bind innovation—when they do not stifle it.)

Core competencies are integrated and harmonized abilities that provide potential access to markets; create and deliver value to clients, audiences, and partners there; and are difficult for competitors to imitate. They depend on relentless design of strategic architecture, deployment of competence carriers, and commitment to collaborate across silos. They are the product of collective learning.

## LEARNING BEFORE, DURING, AND AFTER ...

Knowledge is what you learn from experience before, during, and after the event.<sup>2</sup> Since it is both a thing and a flow, the best way to manage knowledge is to cater at all times to the environment in which it can be identified, created, stored, shared, and used. Leadership, organization, technology, and learning that engender knowledge-enriched solutions are central to that.

**“ Companies should decide what processes and competencies they must excel at and specify measures for each. ”**

— Robert Kaplan and David Norton

<sup>1</sup> Gary Hamel is the originator (with C. K. Prahalad) of the concept of core competencies. See Gary Hamel and C.K. Prahalad. 1994. *Competing for the Future*. Harvard Business School Press.

<sup>2</sup> These three phases are concerned with feedforward, concurrent, and feedback control. In each phase, the focus is on inputs, ongoing processes, and outcomes, respectively.



### ... WITH KNOWLEDGE SOLUTIONS

But what of tools, methods, and approaches for learning? To drive development forward and enhance its effects, the Asian Development Bank has, since 2008, published the *Knowledge Solutions* series. It aims to build competencies in the areas of strategy development, management techniques, collaboration

mechanisms, knowledge sharing and learning, and knowledge capture and storage, all of them essential to knowledge management and learning. Because documentation can be cumbersome, these *Knowledge Solutions* offer “cheat sheets” that simplify access and reference to the series. ■



**Table: Seeding Knowledge Solutions Before, During, and After**

Area of Competence	Key for Reflection	Knowledge Solution
Strategy Development	<i>A strategy is a long-term plan of action designed to achieve a particular goal.</i>	
	<b>Behavior and Change</b>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How can a strategy focus on group relationships with appreciation of their distinctive ideas, beliefs, values, and knowledge?</li> <li>How can it utilize stories of significant change to monitor and evaluate performance?</li> <li>How might it shift the focus from changes in state to changes in behaviors, relationships, actions, and activities?</li> <li>How could you anchor it in understanding of livelihoods and appreciation of the factors that constrain or enhance these as well as their relationships?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Culture Theory</li> <li>The Most Significant Change Technique</li> <li>Outcome Mapping</li> <li>The Sustainable Livelihoods Approach</li> </ul>
	<b>Emergence and Scenario Thinking</b>	
Strategy Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Is your strategy the outcome of a human-centered, prototype-driven process for the exploration of new ideas?</li> <li>Does it maintain a balance between strategizing and learning modes of thinking?</li> <li>How emergent is it? Does it consider other scenarios?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Design Thinking</li> <li>From Strategy to Practice</li> <li>Reading the Future</li> </ul>
	<b>Institutional Capacity and Participation</b>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How does a strategy promote participation at requisite levels?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Building Institutional Capacity for Development</li> </ul>

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Table continued

Area of Competence	Key for Reflection	Knowledge Solution
Strategy Development	<b>Knowledge Assets</b>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Is your strategy for knowledge management enriched by regular knowledge audits?</li> <li>Does its practice integrate the need to systematically review, evaluate, prioritize, sequence, manage, redirect, and if necessary even cancel strategic initiatives?</li> <li>Is your approach to dissemination underpinned by policy, strategy, planning, and tactics? How can your knowledge products be made available in a flexible range of formats in recognition of the varied needs of consumers?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Auditing Knowledge</li> <li>Enhancing Knowledge Management Strategies</li> <li>Linking Research to Practice</li> </ul>
	<b>Marketing</b>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How does a strategy apply a custom blend of the four Ps and other marketing techniques to transform communications with stakeholders and improve performance?</li> <li>How might it draw on marketing principles to effect changes in the behavior of individuals or groups?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Future of Social Marketing</li> <li>Marketing in the Public Sector</li> </ul>
	<b>Organizational Learning</b>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How can a strategy support and energize organization, people, knowledge, and technology for learning?</li> <li>How might it integrate evaluation results to support policy, strategy, and operational changes?</li> <li>How could it distinguish roadblocks to make them part of the solution instead of part of the problem?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Building a Learning Organization</li> <li>Learning Lessons with Knowledge Audits</li> <li>Overcoming Roadblocks to Learning</li> </ul>
Management Techniques	<b>Partnerships and Networks of Practice</b>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Does your strategy leverage partnerships and recognize their drivers of success and failure?</li> <li>How might it make out social networks and analyze the actors and the relationships between them?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Creating and Running Partnerships</li> <li>Social Network Analysis</li> </ul>
	<i>Leadership is the process of working out the right things to do. Management is the process of doing things right.</i>	
	<b>Branding and Value</b>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How might we embrace branding to drive organizational behavior and behavioral change?</li> <li>Do value cycles maximize the potential of knowledge services and knowledge solutions through delivery platforms?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>New-Age Branding and the Public Sector</li> <li>Value Cycles for Development Outcomes</li> </ul>
	<b>Complexity and Lateral Thinking</b>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How might we investigate deeply the cause-and-effect relationships underlying problems?</li> <li>Do you enable different perspectives to be generated and applied in management processes?</li> <li>How might one brainstorm to resolve a problem, meet an opportunity, or turn a tired idea into something new and different?</li> <li>Why should management practices encompass sense and decision making in multiple contexts?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Five Whys Technique</li> <li>The Reframing Matrix</li> <li>The SCAMPER Technique</li> <li>Understanding Complexity</li> </ul>
	<b>Linear Thinking</b>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How can we manage for results with a coherent framework for strategic planning, management, and communications?</li> <li>How does one focus on time, cost, human resources, scope, quality, and actions as common parameters of project performance?</li> <li>Do you make use of logic models for objectives-oriented planning that structures the main elements in a project, highlighting linkages between intended inputs, planned activities, and expected results?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Crafting a Knowledge Management Results Framework</li> <li>Focusing on Project Metrics</li> <li>Output Accomplishment and the Design and Monitoring Framework</li> </ul>

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Table continued

Area of Competence	Key for Reflection	Knowledge Solution
Management Techniques	<b>Organizational Change</b>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How do organizations overcome resistance to change and secure as much discretionary effort as possible?</li> <li>How do we get the right knowledge to the right people at the right time, and help them (with incentives) to apply it in ways that strive to improve organizational performance?</li> <li>How might you prioritize investments in knowledge management?</li> <li>What are the components of organizational culture and what is the role of organizational learning for change?</li> <li>How do organizations learn?</li> <li>How do new knowledge management paradigms compare with the old, and what new structures and managerial attitudes do they require?</li> <li>Why should we drive management innovation?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fast and Effective Change Management</li> <li>Notions of Knowledge Management</li> <li>Picking Investments in Knowledge Management</li> <li>A Primer on Organizational Culture</li> <li>A Primer on Organizational Learning</li> <li>The Roots of an Emerging Discipline</li> <li>Sparkling Innovations in Management</li> </ul>
Collaboration Mechanisms	<b>Talent Management</b>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Do you manage meetings before, during, and after, with appreciation of their different kinds, to make them productive and fun?</li> <li>Should one spend more time, integrity, and brainpower on selecting managers than on anything else?</li> <li>Why should you empower knowledge workers to make the most of their deepest skills and perform best?</li> <li>How does one manage by walking around to emphasize the importance of interpersonal contact, open appreciation, and recognition and build civility and performance in the workplace?</li> <li>How can one give talent strategic and holistic attention to make it happen?</li> <li>Do you have the ability, capacity, skill, or self-perceived ability to identify, assess, and manage the emotions of yourself, of others, and of groups?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Conducting Effective Meetings</li> <li>Growing Managers, Not Bosses</li> <li>Managing Knowledge Workers</li> <li>Managing by Walking Around</li> <li>A Primer on Talent Management</li> <li>Understanding and Developing Emotional Intelligence</li> </ul>
Collaboration Mechanisms	<i>When working with others, efforts sometimes turn out to be less than the sum of the parts. Too often, not enough attention is paid to facilitating effective collaborative practices.</i>	
	<b>Collaborative Tools</b>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How do you harness the power of collaborative minds to innovate faster, cocreate, and cut costs?</li> <li>How does one represent, link, and arrange concepts, themes, or tasks under a central topic?</li> <li>How can we actualize the thinking potential of teams?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Collaborating with Wikis</li> <li>Drawing Mind Maps</li> <li>Wearing Six Thinking Hats</li> </ul>
	<b>Communities of Practice and Learning Alliances</b>	
Collaboration Mechanisms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How do you build a community of like-minded, interacting people to ensure more effective creation and sharing of knowledge in a domain?</li> <li>How can communities of practice report better?</li> <li>Why should strategic alliances manage the partnership, not just the agreement, for collaborative advantage?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Building Communities of Practice</li> <li>Improving Sector and Thematic Reporting</li> <li>Learning in Strategic Alliances</li> </ul>
	<b>Leadership</b>	
Collaboration Mechanisms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How should we earn, develop, and retain trust for superior results?</li> <li>How can one distribute leadership if it is an outcome, not an input to business processes and performance?</li> <li>Why would you support people who choose to serve first, and then lead, as a way of expanding service to individuals and organizations?</li> <li>What is the new context for leadership in the public sector?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Building Trust in the Workplace</li> <li>Distributing Leadership</li> <li>Exercising Servant Leadership</li> <li>Leading in the Workplace</li> </ul>

continued on next page



Table continued

Area of Competence	Key for Reflection	Knowledge Solution
Collaboration Mechanisms	<b>Social Innovations</b>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>By what process can one unearth what works to facilitate positive change in organizations?</li> <li>How can you generate good ideas that meet pressing unmet needs and improve people's lives to foster smart, sustainable globalization?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Appreciative Inquiry</li> <li>Sparkling Social Innovations</li> </ul>
	<b>Teamwork</b>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How do you enable small groups to work regularly and collectively on complicated problems, take action, and learn as individuals and as a team while doing so?</li> <li>How can we organize and coordinate with effect a group whose members are not in the same location or time zone, and may not even work for the same organization?</li> <li>How does one develop a successful team?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Action Learning</li> <li>Managing Virtual Teams</li> <li>Working in Teams</li> </ul>
Knowledge Sharing and Learning	<i>Two-way communications that take place simply and effectively build knowledge.</i>	
	<b>Creativity, Innovation, and Learning</b>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What are the forms and functions of networks of practice and how do you monitor and evaluate performance?</li> <li>How do you harness, individually or in association, useful models of learning and change to reflect on the dimensions of a learning organization?</li> <li>How can an organization demonstrate commitment to learning, against which provision and practice can be tested and serve as a waymark with which to guide, monitor, and evaluate progress?</li> <li>What are the stimulants and obstacles to creativity and innovation that drive or impede enterprise in organizations?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Building Networks of Practice</li> <li>Dimensions of the Learning Organization</li> <li>Drawing Learning Charters</li> <li>Harnessing Creativity and Innovation in the Workplace</li> </ul>
	<b>Learning and Development</b>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How can we coach and mentor to inspire and empower employees, build commitment, increase productivity, grow talent, and promote success?</li> <li>What are the five functions of managers toward which learning and development can be extended to improve their insights, attitudes, and skills?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Coaching and Mentoring</li> <li>Learning and Development for Management</li> </ul>
	<b>Learning Lessons</b>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How do you know what question to ask when?</li> <li>When a critical milestone has been reached, why should we discuss successes and failures in an open and honest fashion?</li> <li>How does one step back from day-to-day activities to think about the future?</li> <li>How can individuals come together to share their experiences, insights, and knowledge on an identified challenge or problem?</li> <li>Is failure a way to an opportunity?</li> <li>How can one suggest that a process or methodology that has been shown to be effective in one part of an organization and might be effective in another too?</li> <li>How might evaluation serve as a foundation block in learning organizations?</li> <li>What is the potential of stories or narratives as a communication tool to value, share, and capitalize on the knowledge of individuals?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Asking Effective Questions</li> <li>Conducting After-Action Reviews and Retrospects</li> <li>Conducting Successful Retreats</li> <li>Conducting Peer Assists</li> <li>Embracing Failure</li> <li>Identifying and Sharing Good Practices</li> <li>Learning from Evaluation</li> <li>Storytelling</li> </ul>

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Table continued

Area of Competence	Key for Reflection	Knowledge Solution
Knowledge Sharing and Learning	<b>Dissemination</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How can an ordinary presentation become a lively and engaging event?</li> <li>By what interactive process does one communicate knowledge to target audiences to lead to change?</li> <li>How do you employ the internet to disseminate research findings?</li> <li>How do we save time in writing, make writing far easier, and improve understanding?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Conducting Effective Presentations</li> <li>Disseminating Knowledge Products</li> <li>Posting Research Online</li> <li>Using Plain English</li> </ul>
Knowledge Capture and Storage	<p><i>Knowledge leaks in various ways at various times.</i></p> <b>Knowledge Harvesting</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How do you garner feedback on why employees leave, what they liked about their job, and where the organization needs improvement?</li> <li>What, in simple terms, are the most common concepts in knowledge management?</li> <li>How do you draw out and package tacit knowledge to help others adapt, personalize, and apply it; build organizational capacity; and preserve institutional memory?</li> <li>Why should one cut information overload and showcase knowledge?</li> <li>How do we build dynamic, adaptive electronic directories that store information about the knowledge, skills, experience, and interests of people?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Conducting Exit Interviews</li> <li>Glossary of Knowledge Management</li> <li>Harvesting Knowledge</li> <li>Showcasing Knowledge</li> <li>Staff Profile Pages</li> </ul>
	<b>Reporting</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How can one garner feedback from executing agencies on the effectiveness of assistance in capacity development?</li> <li>By what simple feedback mechanisms might you promote learning before, during, and after to document accomplishments as well as bottlenecks?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assessing the Effectiveness of Assistance in Capacity Development</li> <li>Monthly Progress Notes</li> </ul>
	<b>Technology Platforms</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How can groups discuss electronically areas of interest and review different opinions and information surrounding a topic?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Writing Weblogs</li> </ul>

Source: Author.





# Sparking Innovations in Management

Gary Hamel defines management innovation as a marked departure from traditional management principles, processes, and practices (or a departure from customary organizational forms that significantly alters the way the work of management is performed). He deems it the prime driver of sustainable competitive advantage in the 21st century.



## CELEBRATING A CENTURY OF MANAGEMENT

The Economist's *Guide to Management Ideas and Gurus*<sup>1</sup> enumerates 103 management concepts that have impacted companies over the past century and the 56 more influential people behind them.<sup>2</sup> The *Guide to the Management Gurus*<sup>3</sup> honors 45 key thinkers. There are many other handbooks on the topic: in *The Handy Guide to the Gurus of Management*,<sup>4</sup> the British Broadcasting Corporation offers students a pithy and accessible selection of a dozen important figures.

On the other hand, Gary Hamel argues provocatively in *The Future of Management*<sup>5</sup> that management is a maturing technology that has witnessed few genuine breakthroughs since Frederick Winslow Taylor<sup>6</sup> and Max Weber<sup>7</sup> set the ground rules 100 years ago in the wake of the upheaval

caused by the industrial revolution and subsequent need for rationalization. From their work and influence, as well as the innovations of contemporaries such as Henri Fayol,<sup>8</sup> grew standardized job descriptions and work methods, protocols for production planning and scheduling, cost accounting and profit analysis, exception-based reporting and detailed financial controls, incentive-based compensation schemes and personnel divisions, capital budgeting, the fundamental architecture of multidivisional organizations, and early principles of brand management. These *Knowledge Solutions* promote Gary Hamel's ideas, researched and promulgated also by the "Management Lab"<sup>9</sup> that he and Julian Birkinshaw founded to accelerate the evolution of management knowledge and practice.

<sup>1</sup> Tim Hindle. 2008. *Guide to Management Ideas and Gurus*. Economist Books.

<sup>2</sup> Tim Hindle names Peter Drucker, Douglas McGregor, Michael Porter, Alfred Sloan, and Frederick Winslow Taylor. Peter Drucker invented or prefigured almost all leading management theories of the last half century (and foresaw most trends, such as the emergence of the knowledge worker), including mission, "structure follows strategy," the role of the chief executive, management by objectives, "sticking to the knitting" (the core business), customer care, marketing, and even privatization. Douglas McGregor formulated "Theory X" and "Theory Y," viz., authoritarian as opposed to participative styles of management based on opposing views of human nature at work. Michael Porter defined competitive strategy and advantage. Under "federal decentralization," as he termed it, Alfred Sloan reorganized General Motors into what became the template for every organization; he also introduced a systemic strategic planning procedure for his company's divisions. Frederick Winslow Taylor pioneered time and motion studies, out of which grew the idea of piece work; he enabled Henry Ford's mass-production revolution.

<sup>3</sup> Carol Kennedy. 2002. *Guide to the Management Gurus: The Best Guide to Business Thinkers*. Business Books. The "Famous Five" feature there too.

<sup>4</sup> See British Broadcasting Corporation. 2010. Available: [www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/learningenglish/work/handy/](http://www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/learningenglish/work/handy/)

<sup>5</sup> Gary Hamel. 2007. *The Future of Management*. Harvard Business School Publishing.

<sup>6</sup> Frederick Winslow Taylor (1856–1915), an American mechanical engineer, sought to improve industrial efficiency. He was the father of scientific management, a theory of management that analyzes and synthesizes workflows, with the objective of improving labor productivity.

<sup>7</sup> Max Weber (1864–1920), a German lawyer, politician, historian, political economist, and sociologist, is reputed for his study of the bureaucratization of society. He viewed bureaucracy as the pinnacle of social organization, considering it a more rational and efficient form than the arrangements that had preceded it, e.g., charismatic domination and traditional domination. (According to his terminology, bureaucracy is part of legal domination.)

<sup>8</sup> Henri Fayol (1841–1925), a French mining engineer and management theorist, developed a general theory of management independently of Frederick Winslow Taylor. He identified the six primary functions of management to be (i) forecasting, (ii) planning, (iii) organizing, (iv) commanding, (v) coordinating, and (vi) controlling.

<sup>9</sup> See Mlab. 2010. Available: [www.managementlab.org/](http://www.managementlab.org/)



## THE POVERTY OF MANAGEMENT

Gary Hamel is known for his work on core competencies<sup>10</sup> and strategic intent.<sup>11</sup> Yet, his ambitions promise more. Advancing from earlier insights,<sup>12</sup> he concludes, in *The Future of Management*, that it is innovation in management that is most likely to create sustainable competitive advantage in the 21st century.

**“It ain’t what you don’t know that gets you into trouble. It’s what you know for sure that just ain’t so.”**

— Mark Twain

This is not to say that there have been no original ideas: the evidence in guides to management thinkers refutes that argument. (For example, Michael Mol and Julian Birkinshaw identify 50 important changes categorized under process, money, people management, internal structures, customer and partner interfaces, innovation and strategy, and information efficiency.)<sup>13</sup> However, most innovations—often formulated in purpose-built research and development departments—have been first and foremost in operations, then in products and services and, to a far lesser extent, in strategies; they have rarely been in management itself.<sup>14</sup>

The paucity of significant breakthroughs should not surprise: after all, management was invented 100 years ago to solve the problem of inefficiency in organizations.<sup>15</sup> Therefore, to this day, management operates primarily through routine functions, e.g., planning, organizing, commanding, and controlling. Synthesizing a century of management theory, Gary Hamel suggests that the practice of management continues to entail

- Setting goals and objectives and laying out plans;
- Amassing and allocating resources;
- Identifying, developing, and assigning talent;
- Motivating and aligning effort;
- Coordinating and controlling activities;
- Acquiring, accumulating, and applying knowledge;
- Building and nurturing relationships; and
- Understanding, balancing, and meeting stakeholder demands.

Of course, all these tasks are central to the accomplishment of purpose, hence the common focus of innovation on operations,

products and services, and strategies. The typical processes for control, discipline, precision, stability, and especially reliability<sup>16</sup> that claim the lion’s share of attention, and were themselves one-time management innovations, are

- Strategic planning,
- Return on investment analysis and capital budgeting,
- Project management,
- Research and development,
- Brand management,
- Leadership development,
- Recruitment and promotion,
- Learning and development,
- Internal communications,
- Knowledge management,
- Periodic business reviews, and
- Employee performance assessment and compensation.

Naturally, the public sector is not exempt. In 2000, a study<sup>17</sup> of public management innovation in the United States and Canada examined (i) the characteristics of public sector innovations, (ii) where in the organization innovations originated, (iii) whether innovations came about as a result of planning or groping, (iv) the obstacles to change innovators faced and how they overcame them, (v) the results achieved by these innovations, and (vi) whether these innovations were replicated. The study, from which the following text quotes, found that (i) the dominant characteristic of public management innovations is that they were holistic, e.g., systems approaches to problems, coordinating activities, with second-magnitude characteristics being the use of new information technology and process improvement, e.g., partnerships with the private sector, new management philosophies, and empowerment; (ii) the most frequent initiators of public management innovations were local heroes, visionary middle-level and frontline public servants who took risks despite disincentives; (iii) innovations were a result of both comprehensive planning and incremental groping; (iv) the most frequent obstacles to innovations were internal to the bureaucracy; (v) obstacles to change were most frequently overcome by persuasion or accommodation; (vi) innovative programs produced results, such as increased demand, reduced costs, and improved service, morale, and productivity; and (vii) innovative programs received substantial media attention and were widely replicated.

<sup>10</sup> A core competency is a specific factor that an organization sees as central to the way it works.

<sup>11</sup> Strategic intent intuitively that strategy should be more active and interactive, with attributes of direction, discovery, and destiny.

<sup>12</sup> See Gary Hamel. 2002. *Leading the Revolution*. Penguin Books.

<sup>13</sup> Michael Mol and Julian Birkinshaw. 2008. *Giant Steps in Management: Innovations That Change the Way You Work*. Pearson Education Ltd.

<sup>14</sup> This would become more readily apparent if the history of management were taught in business schools.

<sup>15</sup> Efficiency is the ratio of the output to the input of any system.

<sup>16</sup> Organizations value reliability. It is easier to improve existing processes than to ask effective questions about what change might really be needed. It is also more difficult to prove that something new will pay off than to use traditional logic to vaunt the benefits of a modification. Taken to extremes, fascination with “objective” criteria and highly visible indicators perverts systems and feeds hypocrisy so that the behaviors that are desired are not rewarded at all. See Steven Kerr. 1975. On the Folly of Rewarding A while Hoping for B. *Academy of Management Journal*. 18. pp. 769–783.

<sup>17</sup> The study was based on samples of 217 of the best applications to the Ford Foundation—Kennedy School of Government innovation awards and 33 of the best applications to the Institute of Public Administration of Canada’s management innovation awards, both between 1990 and 1994. See Sandford Borins. 2000. What Border? Public Management Innovation in the United States and Canada. *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management*. 19 (1). pp. 46–74.

## MANAGING WITH IMAGINATION

Management innovation would concern itself with changing these processes, which govern daily managerial work. With globalization, the conditions that existed in the past are less likely to lead to successful prediction: resources have been redefined, networks thrive, options abound, opportunity reigns, people want to achieve, adaptation and foresight are a must, and speed is required. In a sense, since change is the order of the day, what is happening is not new but a logical extension of what has happened before. Naturally, there is now much greater appreciation of the impact of uncertainty on models and behaviors.

Yet, as if to prove that Henri Fayol holds sway even now, the primary role of management in most organizations is still to ensure that resources are obtained and used effectively and efficiently in the accomplishment of the organization's

**“My interest is in the future because I am going to spend the rest of my life there.”**

—Charles Kettering

objectives. (The perception that good management equates—or is closely linked—to good measurement runs deep.) We desire consistent, replicable outcomes, making perhaps marginal improvements. Cybernetic systems, such as thermostats, certainly have advantages; but they can also go too far when applied, for example, to individuals and organizations.

Treating organizations as well-oiled machines makes robots out of personnel. At the very least in so-called developed countries but increasingly elsewhere, what among other factors has changed since Frederick Winslow Taylor's days is the rise of the knowledge worker. (We can, and should, learn more about why talent is attracted to start-ups.) A result can be consistent if we obtain from it what we seek, and hope to replicate, but it may not be valid in the sense that it delivers the value we really need. In thinking about organizations, it is enlightening to consult Kenneth Boulding's<sup>18</sup> classification of systems, which permits a possible arrangement of “levels” of theoretical discourse. At the level of social organizations, the complexity is overwhelming.<sup>19</sup> We cannot know what we miss if we do not know what it is that we do not know. However, we will not create it if we cannot imagine it.<sup>20</sup> This calls for abductive logic.<sup>21</sup>

**Table: General Systems Theory**

Frameworks	The geography and anatomy of the universe: the patterns of electrons around a nucleus, the pattern of atoms in a molecular formula, the arrangement of atoms in a crystal, the anatomy of the gene, the mapping of the earth, the solar system, the astronomical universe, etc.
Clockworks	The solar system or simple machines such as the lever and the pulley, even quite complicated machines like steam engines and dynamos, fall mostly under this category.
Thermostats	Control mechanisms or cybernetic systems: the system will move to the maintenance of any given equilibrium, within limits.
Cells	Open systems or self-maintaining structures. This is the level at which life begins to differentiate itself from not life.
Plants	The outstanding characteristics of these systems, as studied by botanists, are first, a division of labor with differentiated and mutually dependent parts, e.g., roots, leaves, seeds, etc., and second, a sharp differentiation between the genotype and the phenotype, associated with the phenomenon of equifinal or “blueprinted” growth.
Animals	Level characterized by increased mobility, teleological behavior and self-awareness, with the development of specialized information receptors, e.g., eyes, ears, etc., leading to an enormous increase in the intake of information.
Human Beings	In addition to all, or nearly all, of the characteristics of animal systems man possesses self-consciousness, which is something different from mere awareness.
Social Organizations	The unit of such systems is not perhaps the person but the “role”—that part of the person which is concerned with the organization or situation in question. Social organizations, or almost any social system, might be defined as a set of roles tied together with channels of communication.
Transcendental Systems	The ultimates and absolutes and the inescapable unknowables, that also exhibit systematic structure and relationship.

Source: Developed from Kenneth Boulding. 1956. General Systems Theory—The Skeleton of Science. *Management Science*. 2 (3). pp. 197–208.

<sup>18</sup> Kenneth Boulding (1910–1993), a British (then American) economist, educator, systems scientist, and interdisciplinary philosopher, cofounded the general systems theory with Ludwig von Bertalanffy (1901–1972), an Austrian biologist. That is an interdisciplinary theory about complex systems in nature, society, and science. Kenneth Boulding also founded numerous intellectual projects in economics and social science, notably in psychic capital and evolutionary economics.

<sup>19</sup> Hence, to begin to relax control mechanisms, managers had best visualize systems of interconnected and interdependent relationships radiating through their organization to others in its value chain, informed by feedback processes and characterized by emergence.

<sup>20</sup> Roger Martin has argued that organizations can successfully adopt the methodologies and perspectives that designers use. By so doing, they can move from being reliability-oriented to become validity-embracing organizations (but must still speak both languages). Managers, and other personnel too, are responsible for this necessary and by now urgent shift toward design thinking. The purpose of design thinking is to achieve balance through generative reasoning. The approach is based on (i) respect for exploitation and exploration, (ii) assimilation of the future with the past, (iii) the design of what should be, and (iv) integration of analysis and judgment. See Roger Martin. 2009. *The Design of Business: Why Design Thinking is the Next Competitive Advantage*. Harvard Business School Publishing.

<sup>21</sup> Abduction is a method of intuitive logical inference introduced by Charles Sanders Peirce (1839–1914), an American philosopher, logician, mathematician, and scientist. The colloquial name of abduction is (to have) a “hunch”. Deduction allows deriving *b* as a consequence of *a*. Induction allows inferring *a* entails *b* from multiple instantiations of *a* and *b* at the same time. Abduction allows inferring *a* as an explanation of *b*.



## SPARKING MANAGEMENT INNOVATION

Personnel is more often than not dissatisfied with managers.<sup>22</sup> (Mark the interest in 360-degree feedback to improve their performance.)<sup>23</sup> Functional management is an artifact of the 20th century. In anachronistic organizations that stick to what they can measure instead of imagining the future, managers plead forgiveness for being prisoners of a reality they work to reinforce each day. But frustration about the very roles they play is also growing and signals a future in which management is performed less and less by managers.

**“Just as energy is the basis of life itself, and ideas the source of innovation, so is innovation the vital spark of all human change, improvement, and progress.”**

— Theodore Levitt

Gary Hamel defines management innovation as a marked departure from traditional management principles, processes, and practices (or a departure from customary organizational forms that significantly alters the way the work of management is performed). To be clear, that is innovation in management principles and processes that ultimately changes the practice of what managers do and how they do it. This distinguishes it from innovation in operations, products and services, and strategies. Gary Hamel picks out 12 innovations that shaped modern management:<sup>24</sup>

- Scientific management (time and motion studies),
- Cost accounting and variance analysis,
- The commercial research laboratory (the industrialization of science),
- Return on investment analysis and capital budgeting,
- Brand management,
- Large-scale project management,

- Divisionalization,
- Leadership development,
- Industry consortia (multicompany collaborative structures),
- Radical decentralization (self-organization),
- Formalized strategic analysis, and
- Employee-driven problem solving.

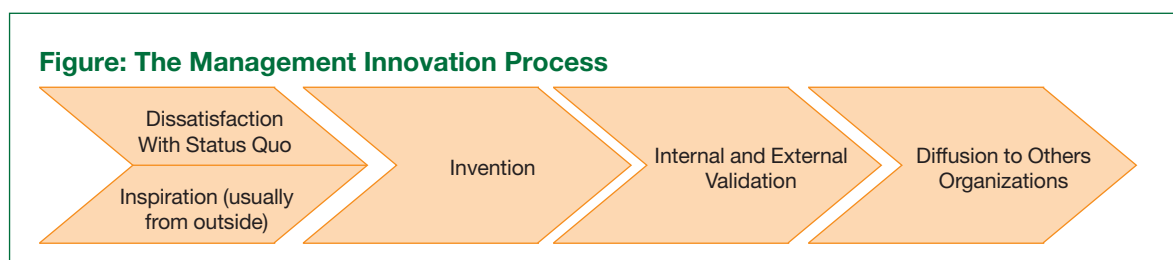
**“Innovation! One cannot be forever innovating. I want to create classics.”**

— Coco Chanel

The process that drove the 12 innovations listed was dissatisfaction with the status quo (the motivation phase), inspiration from other sources, invention, and internal and external validation—after which the innovations were copied by other organizations and spread across entire industries and countries. High-performance organizations take measures to mainstream ad hoc and incremental management innovation and accelerate its process. According to Gary Hamel, Julian Birkinshaw, and Michael Mol, essential steps are to

- Become a conscious management innovator, able to examine management innovations from various perspectives, e.g., institutional, fashion, cultural, and rational;
- Create a questioning, problem-solving culture;
- Commit to big problems;
- Search for new principles;
- Deconstruct management orthodoxies;
- Seek analogies and exemplars from different environments;
- Build a capacity for low-risk experimentation;
- Make use of external change agents, e.g., academics, consultants, media organizations, management gurus, and former personnel, to test the organization’s new ideas; and
- Become a serial management innovator.

**Figure: The Management Innovation Process**



Source: Julian Birkinshaw and Michael Mol. 2006. How Management Innovation Happens. *MIT Sloan Management Review*. 47 (4). pp. 80–88.

<sup>22</sup> Typically, one-third of promotions ends in failure, one-third is passable, and the remainder meets the purpose.

<sup>23</sup> Theodore Zeldin recalled, in a 2008 interview with the *Financial Times*, a conversation with chief executives in London. One of them said: “We can no longer select people, they select us. If we want the best people and we want to attract them, we have to say: What do you want in your job?” It is plain that the power of recruiters no longer holds much weight. See *Financial Times*. 2010. Available: [www.ft.com/cms/s/2/43a2ca6a-d392-11dc-b861-0000779fd2ac.html](http://www.ft.com/cms/s/2/43a2ca6a-d392-11dc-b861-0000779fd2ac.html)

<sup>24</sup> Gary Hamel. 2006. The Why, What, and How of Management Innovation. *Harvard Business Review*. 2. pp. 72–84.



There are elements of destructive creation to this: for each relevant management process, key questions are

- Who owns the process?
- Who has the power to change it?
- What are its objectives?
- What are the success metrics?
- Who are the customers of this process?
- Who gets to participate?
- What are the data or information inputs for this process?
- What analytical tools are used?
- What events and milestones drive this process?
- What kind of decisions does this process generate?
- What are the decision-making criteria?
- How are decisions communicated, and to whom?
- How does this process link to other management systems?

**“Innovation is not the product of logical thought, although the result is tied to logical structure.”**

—Albert Einstein

## VISIONS OF THE PRESENT

Three forces should drive management innovation in the 2010s: (i) the unrelenting development of the internet<sup>25</sup> (and the communities and networks of interest and practice it has spawned); (ii) globalization (and the new attitudes toward work and the way it is performed that collaboration and competition, mostly encouraged by the internet, are engendering); and (iii) workforce demographics (as Generation X<sup>26</sup> then Generation Y<sup>27</sup> come of corporate age). High-performance organizations will push management innovation to meet challenges, rather than having it pulled from them.

**“Never before in history has innovation offered promise of so much to so many in so short a time.”**

—Bill Gates

In *The Future of Management*, Gary Hamel envisions a time when the goal of management is to build nimble, lattice-based organizations that energize and demand, that may be big yet

### Box: Design Rules for Innovation

1. Unreasonable expectations
2. Elastic business definition
3. A cause, not a business
4. New voices
5. A market for innovation
6. Low-risk experimentation
7. Cellular division
8. Connectivity

Source: Gary Hamel. 2002. *Leading the Revolution*. Penguin Books.

personal. In nimble organizations, there is more freedom and self-management. Personnel—partners and volunteers all, share a sense of purpose and commitment (not assignment) and have no need for exhortation from senior leaders. There is less hierarchy but plenty of leaders.

In nimble organizations, innovation is everyone's responsibility, especially where it humanizes work. Nimble organizations deploy considerable efforts to ensure that personnel is connected and collective wisdom is harnessed through continuous, company-wide conversations that build trust and understanding. Generally unmonitored time as well as “elbow room” in terms of human and other resources enable people to think, take measured risk, and innovate freely through rapid, low-cost experimentation. Personnel operates in small, self-managing teams that senior leaders sponsor and referee, with authority given to the teams to recruit, develop, and dismiss members. Individuals can redesign their jobs or relocate themselves in the organization. Freedom travels hand in hand with accountability: performance is rewarded at all levels, both individual and collective. ■

## FURTHER READING

- Gary Hamel. 2002. *Leading the Revolution*. Penguin Books.
- . 2006. The Why, What, and How of Management Innovation. *Harvard Business Review*. 2. pp. 72–84.
- . 2007. *The Future of Management*. Harvard Business School Publishing.

<sup>25</sup> The internet permeates our lives. It has changed (and will continue to change) how we find and share information, stay in touch, and do business. Indeed, the internet may be the best metaphor for management in the 21st century. It is creating a democracy of ideas (that gives everyone the chance to opt in), amplifying human imagination, aggregating collective wisdom, dynamically reallocating resources, and minimizing the drag of obsolete mental models.

<sup>26</sup> Generation X is the generation born after the post Second World War Baby Boom ended, with earliest birth dates used by researchers ranging from 1961 to the latest 1981.

<sup>27</sup> Generation Y describes the demographic cohort following Generation X. Its members are often referred to as Echo Boomers or Millennials. As there are no precise dates for when Generation Y starts and ends, commentators have used birth dates ranging from the mid-1970s to the early 2000s.



### MANAGEMENT TECHNIQUES

Leadership is the process of working out the right things to do. Management is the process of doing things right.



# Understanding and Developing Emotional Intelligence

Emotional intelligence describes an ability, capacity, skill, or self-perceived ability to identify, assess, and manage the emotions of one's self, of others, and of groups. The theory is enjoying considerable support in the literature and has had successful applications in many domains.



## INTRODUCTION

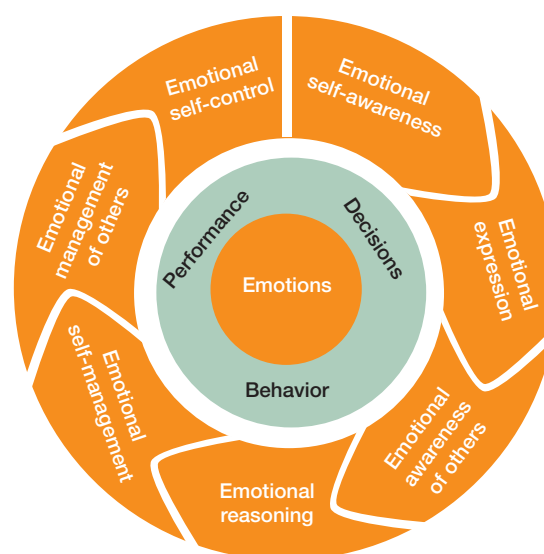
The intelligence quotient, or IQ, is a score derived from one of several different standardized tests to measure intelligence.<sup>1</sup> It has been used to assess giftedness, and sometimes underpin recruitment. Many have argued that IQ, or conventional intelligence, is too narrow: some people are academically brilliant yet socially and interpersonally inept.<sup>2</sup> And we know that success does not automatically follow those who possess a high IQ rating.

Wider areas of intelligence enable or dictate how successful we are. Toughness, determination, and vision help. But emotional intelligence, often measured as an emotional intelligence quotient, or EQ, is more and more relevant to important work-related outcomes such as individual performance, organizational productivity, and developing people because its principles provide a new way to understand and assess the behaviors, management styles, attitudes, interpersonal skills, and potential of people. It is an increasingly important consideration in human resource planning, job profiling, recruitment interviewing and selection, learning and development, and client relations and customer service, among others.

## DEFINITION

Emotional intelligence describes the ability, capacity, skill, or self-perceived ability to identify, assess, and manage the emotions of one's self, of others, and of groups. People who possess a high degree of emotional intelligence know themselves very well and are also able to sense the emotions of others. They are affable, resilient, and optimistic. Surprisingly, emotional intelligence is a relatively recent behavioral model: it was not until the

**Figure 1: An Emotional Intelligence Assessment Tool for the Workplace**



Source: Genos. 2009. Available: [www.genosinternational.com/genos-ei-model](http://www.genosinternational.com/genos-ei-model)

**“If your emotional abilities aren't in hand, if you don't have self-awareness, if you are not able to manage your distressing emotions, if you can't have empathy and have effective relationships, then no matter how smart you are, you are not going to get very far.”**

— Daniel Goleman

<sup>1</sup> When psychologists began to think about intelligence, they focused attention on cognitive aspects such as memory and problem solving.

<sup>2</sup> As early as 1920, Robert Thorndike used the term “social intelligence” to describe the skill of understanding and managing other people. In the 1940s, David Wechsler defined intelligence as the aggregate or global capacity of the individual to act purposefully, think rationally, and deal effectively with his (or her) environment. In 1943, he submitted that non-intellective abilities are essential for predicting one's ability to succeed in life. Later, in 1983, Howard Gardner wrote about multiple intelligences and proposed that intrapersonal and interpersonal intelligences are as important as the type of intelligence typically measured by IQ and related tests.

publication of *Emotional Intelligence: Why It Can Matter More Than IQ* by Daniel Goleman that the term became popular.<sup>3</sup>

## BENEFITS

By developing their emotional intelligence, individuals can become more productive and successful at what they do, and help others become more productive and successful too. The process and outcomes of emotional intelligence development also contain many elements known to reduce stress—for individuals and therefore organizations—by moderating conflict; promoting understanding and relationships; and fostering stability, continuity, and harmony. Last, but not least, it links strongly with concepts of love and spirituality.<sup>4</sup>

**“Emotions have taught mankind to reason.”**

—Marquis de Vauvenargues

## THE MODEL

Individuals have different personalities, wants, needs, and ways of showing their emotions. Navigating through this requires tact and shrewdness—especially if one hopes to succeed in life. This is where emotional intelligence theory helps. In the most generic framework, five domains of emotional intelligence cover together personal (self-awareness, self-regulation, and self-motivation) and social (social awareness and social skills) competencies.<sup>5</sup> They are

- Self-Awareness
  - (i) Emotional awareness: Recognizing one's emotions and their effects.
  - (ii) Accurate self-assessment: Knowing one's strengths and limits.
  - (iii) Self-confidence: Sureness about one's self-worth and capabilities.
- Self-Regulation
  - (i) Self-control: Managing disruptive emotions and impulses.
  - (ii) Trustworthiness: Maintaining standards of honesty and integrity.
  - (iii) Conscientiousness: Taking responsibility for personal performance.
- (iv) Adaptability: Flexibility in handling change.
- (v) Innovativeness: Being comfortable with and open to novel ideas and new information.
- Self-Motivation
  - (i) Achievement drive: Striving to improve or meet a standard of excellence.
  - (ii) Commitment: Aligning with the goals of the group or organization.
  - (iii) Initiative: Readiness to act on opportunities.
  - (iv) Optimism: Persistence in pursuing goals despite obstacles and setbacks.
- Social Awareness
  - (i) Empathy: Sensing others' feelings and perspective, and taking an active interest in their concerns.
  - (ii) Service orientation: Anticipating, recognizing, and meeting customers' needs.
  - (iii) Developing others: Sensing what others need in order to develop, and bolstering their abilities.
  - (iv) Leveraging diversity: Cultivating opportunities through diverse people.

**Figure 2: The Domains of Emotional Intelligence**



Source: Author.

<sup>3</sup> Emotional intelligence draws from branches of behavioral, emotional, and communications theories. Goleman is the person most commonly associated with it. (But he is by no means the only researcher: the most distant roots of emotional intelligence can be traced to Charles Darwin's early work on the importance of emotional expression for survival and adaptation.) Wayne Leon Payne is credited with first using the term "emotional intelligence" in 1985. Soon after, in 1990, John Mayer and Peter Salovey described that as the ability to monitor one's own and others' feelings and emotions, to discriminate among them, and to use this information to guide one's thinking and actions. In 1997, their four branch model defined emotional intelligence as involving the abilities to perceive, accurately, emotions in oneself and others; use emotions to facilitate thinking; understand the meaning of emotions; and manage emotions. They also tried to develop a way to scientifically measure differences between people's abilities in the area of emotions.

<sup>4</sup> Nor surprisingly, perhaps, Goleman published *Social Intelligence: The New Science of Social Relationships* in 2006 to illuminate theories about attachment, bonding, and the making and remaking of memory as he examined how our brains are wired for altruism, compassion, concern, and rapport. Good relationships nourish us and support our health, while toxic relationships can poison us. He proposed that social intelligence is made up of social awareness (including empathy, attunement, empathic accuracy, and social cognition) and social facility (including synchrony, self-presentation, influence, and concern).

<sup>5</sup> The material that follows comes from the Consortium for Research on Emotional Intelligence in Organizations. 1998. *Emotional Competence Framework*. Available: [www.eiconsortium.org/reports/emotional\\_competence\\_framework.html](http://www.eiconsortium.org/reports/emotional_competence_framework.html)



- (v) Political awareness: Reading a group's emotional currents and power relationships.
- Social Skills
  - (i) Influence: Wielding effective tactics for persuasion.
  - (ii) Communication: Sending clear and convincing messages.
  - (iii) Leadership: Inspiring and guiding groups and people.
  - (iv) Change catalyst: Initiating or managing change.
  - (v) Conflict management: Negotiating and resolving disagreements.
  - (vi) Building bonds: Nurturing instrumental relationships.
  - (vii) Collaboration and cooperation: Working with others toward shared goals.

**“I respect the man who knows distinctly what he wishes. The greater part of all mischief in the world arises from the fact that men do not sufficiently understand their own aims. They have undertaken to build a tower, and spend no more labor on the foundation than would be necessary to erect a hut.”**

— Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

- (viii) Team capabilities: Creating group synergy in pursuing collective goals.

In brief, the five domains relate to knowing your emotions; managing your emotions; motivating yourself; recognizing

**Table: The Personal and Social Attributes of Emotional Intelligence**

Competence	Attribute
<b>Self-Awareness</b>	
Emotional Awareness	Individuals with this competence <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Know which emotions they are feeling and why;</li> <li>Realize the links between their feelings and what they think, do, and say;</li> <li>Recognize how their feelings affect their performance; and</li> <li>Have a guiding awareness of their values and goals.</li> </ul>
Accurate Self-Assessment	Individuals with this competence are <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Aware of their strengths and weaknesses;</li> <li>Reflective, learning from experience;</li> <li>Open to candid feedback, new perspectives, continuous learning, and self-development; and</li> <li>Able to show a sense of humor and perspective about themselves.</li> </ul>
Self-Confidence	Individuals with this competence <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Present themselves with self-assurance and have presence;</li> <li>Can voice views that are unpopular and go out on a limb for what is right; and</li> <li>Are decisive and able to make sound decisions despite uncertainties and pressures.</li> </ul>
<b>Self-Regulation</b>	
Self-Control	Individuals with this competence <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Manage their impulsive feelings and distressing emotions well;</li> <li>Stay composed, positive, and unflappable even in trying moments; and</li> <li>Think clearly and stay focused under pressure.</li> </ul>
Trustworthiness	Individuals with this competence <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Act ethically and are above reproach;</li> <li>Build trust through their reliability and authenticity;</li> <li>Admit their own mistakes and confront unethical actions in others; and</li> <li>Take tough, principled stands even if they are unpopular.</li> </ul>
Conscientiousness	Individuals with this competence <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Meet commitments and keep promises;</li> <li>Hold themselves accountable for meeting their objectives; and</li> <li>Are organized and careful in their work.</li> </ul>
Adaptability	Individuals with this competence <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Smoothly handle multiple demands, shifting priorities, and rapid change;</li> <li>Adapt their responses and tactics to fit fluid circumstances; and</li> <li>Are flexible in how they see events.</li> </ul>
Innovativeness	Individuals with this competence <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Seek out fresh ideas from a wide variety of sources;</li> <li>Entertain original solutions to problems;</li> <li>Generate new ideas; and</li> <li>Take fresh perspectives and risks in their thinking.</li> </ul>

*continued on next page*

Table continued

Competence		Attribute
<b>Self-Motivation</b>		
Achievement Drive	Individuals with this competence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are results-oriented, with a high drive to meet their objectives and standards;</li> <li>• Set challenging goals and take calculated risks;</li> <li>• Pursue information to reduce uncertainty and find ways to do better; and</li> <li>• Learn how to improve their performance.</li> </ul>
Commitment	Individuals with this competence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Readily make personal or group sacrifices to meet a larger organizational goal;</li> <li>• Find a sense of purpose in the larger mission;</li> <li>• Use the group's core values in making decisions and clarifying choices; and</li> <li>• Actively seek out opportunities to fulfill the group's mission.</li> </ul>
Initiative	Individuals with this competence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are ready to seize opportunities;</li> <li>• Pursue goals beyond what is required or expected of them;</li> <li>• Cut through red tape and bend the rules when necessary to get the job done; and</li> <li>• Mobilize others through unusual, enterprising efforts.</li> </ul>
Optimism	Individuals with this competence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Persist in seeking goals despite obstacles and setbacks;</li> <li>• Operate from hope of success rather than fear of failure; and</li> <li>• See setbacks as due to manageable circumstance rather than a personal flaw.</li> </ul>
<b>Social Awareness</b>		
Empathy	Individuals with this competence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are attentive to emotional cues and listen well;</li> <li>• Show sensitivity and understand others' perspectives; and</li> <li>• Help out based on understanding other people's needs and feelings.</li> </ul>
Service Orientation	Individuals with this competence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understand customers' needs and match them to services or products;</li> <li>• Seek ways to increase customers' satisfaction and loyalty;</li> <li>• Gladly offer appropriate assistance; and</li> <li>• Grasp a customer's perspective, acting as a trusted advisor.</li> </ul>
Developing Others	Individuals with this competence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Acknowledge and reward people's strengths, accomplishments, and development;</li> <li>• Offer useful feedback and identify people's needs for development; and</li> <li>• Mentor, give timely coaching, and offer assignments that challenge and grow a person's skills.</li> </ul>
Leveraging Diversity	Individuals with this competence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Respect and relate well to people from varied backgrounds;</li> <li>• Understand diverse worldviews and are sensitive to group differences;</li> <li>• See diversity as opportunity, creating an environment where diverse people can thrive; and</li> <li>• Challenge bias and intolerance.</li> </ul>
Political Awareness	Individuals with this competence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Accurately read key power relationships;</li> <li>• Detect crucial social networks;</li> <li>• Understand the forces that shape views and actions of clients, customers, or competitors; and</li> <li>• Accurately read situations and organizational and external realities.</li> </ul>
<b>Social Skills</b>		
Influence	Individuals with this competence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are skilled at persuasion;</li> <li>• Fine-tune presentations to appeal to the listener;</li> <li>• Use complex strategies like indirect influence to build consensus and support; and</li> <li>• Orchestrate dramatic events to effectively make a point.</li> </ul>

continued on next page



Table continued

Competence	Attribute
	<b>Social Skills</b>
Communication	<p>Individuals with this competence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are effective in give-and-take, registering emotional cues in attuning their message;</li> <li>• Deal with difficult issues straightforwardly.</li> <li>• Listen well, seek mutual understanding, and welcome sharing of information fully; and</li> <li>• Foster open communication and stay receptive to bad news as well as good.</li> </ul>
Leadership	<p>Individuals with this competence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Articulate and arouse enthusiasm for a shared vision and mission;</li> <li>• Step forward to lead as needed, regardless of position;</li> <li>• Guide the performance of others while holding them accountable; and</li> <li>• Lead by example.</li> </ul>
Change Catalyst	<p>Individuals with this competence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recognize the need for change and remove barriers;</li> <li>• Challenge the status quo to acknowledge the need for change;</li> <li>• Champion the change and enlist others in its pursuit; and</li> <li>• Model the change expected of others.</li> </ul>
Conflict Management	<p>Individuals with this competence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Handle difficult people and tense situations with diplomacy and tact;</li> <li>• Spot potential conflict, bring disagreements into the open, and help de-escalate;</li> <li>• Encourage debate and open discussion; and</li> <li>• Orchestrate win-win solutions.</li> </ul>
Building Bonds	<p>Individuals with this competence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cultivate and maintain extensive informal networks;</li> <li>• Seek out relationships that are mutually beneficial;</li> <li>• Build rapport and keep others in the loop; and</li> <li>• Make and maintain personal friendships among work associates.</li> </ul>
Collaboration and Cooperation	<p>Individuals with this competence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Balance a focus on task with attention to relationships;</li> <li>• Collaborate, sharing plans, information, and resources;</li> <li>• Promote a friendly and cooperative climate; and</li> <li>• Spot and nurture opportunities for collaboration.</li> </ul>
Team Capabilities	<p>Individuals with this competence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Model team qualities such as respect, helpfulness, and cooperation;</li> <li>• Draw all members into active and enthusiastic participation;</li> <li>• Build team identity, esprit de corps, and commitment; and</li> <li>• Protect the group and its reputation and share credit.</li> </ul>

Source: Developed from Consortium for Research on Emotional Intelligence in Organizations. 1998. *Emotional Competence Framework*. Available: [www.eiconsortium.org/reports/emotional\\_competence\\_framework.html](http://www.eiconsortium.org/reports/emotional_competence_framework.html)

and understanding other people's emotions; and managing relationships, i.e., managing the emotions of others.

## CAN EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE BE LEARNED?

A common question relates to whether people are born with high EQ or whether it can be learned. The truth is that some will be more naturally gifted than others but the good news

are that emotional intelligence skills can be learned. (This must be so because emotional intelligence is shown to increase with age.) However, for this to happen, people must be personally motivated, practice extensively what they learn, receive feedback, and reinforce their new skills.

## PROMOTING EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE IN THE WORKPLACE

The work conducted in most organizations has changed dramatically in the last 20 years. Of course, there are now fewer levels of management and management styles are less autocratic. But there has also been a decided move toward knowledge and team-based, client-oriented jobs so that

**“Nothing great was ever achieved without enthusiasm.”**

—Ralph Waldo Emerson

**“ Comfort in expressing your emotions will allow you to share the best of yourself with others, but not being able to control your emotions will reveal your worst. ”**

—Bryant H. McGill

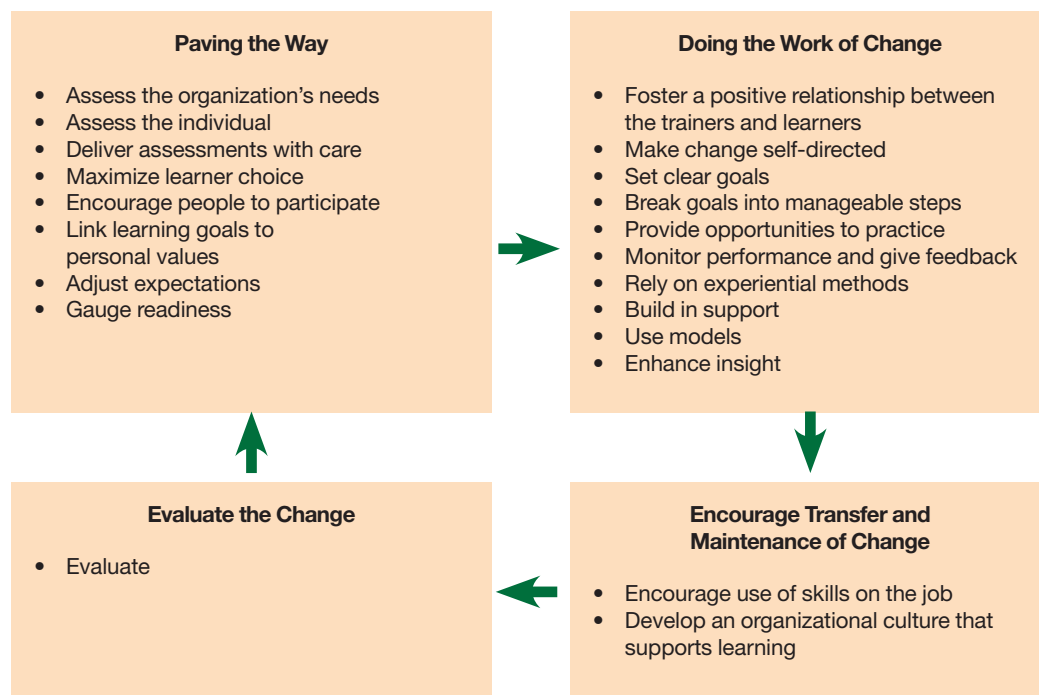


individuals generally have more autonomy, even at the lower levels of organizations. Since modern organizations always look to improve performance, they recognize that objective, measurable benefits can be derived from higher emotional intelligence. To name a few, these include increased sales, better recruitment and retention, and more effective leadership.

Naturally, the criteria for success at work are changing too. Staff are now judged by new yardsticks: not just by how smart they are, or by their training and expertise, but also by

how well they handle themselves and one another. And that is strongly influenced by personal qualities such as perseverance, self-control, and skill in getting along with others. Increasingly, these new yardsticks are being applied to choose who will be hired and who will not, who will be let go and who will be retained, and who will be past over or promoted.

**Figure 2: Good Practices that Cultivate Emotional Intelligence in the Workplace**



Note: The four phases correspond to those of the development process, viz., preparation, training, transfer and maintenance, and evaluation. Each is important. Source: Summarized and developed from Consortium for Research on Emotional Intelligence in Organizations. 1998. *Guidelines for Best Practice*. Available: [www.eiconsortium.org/reports/guidelines.html](http://www.eiconsortium.org/reports/guidelines.html)



Emotional intelligence may be the (long-sought) missing link that unites conventional “can do” ability determinants of job performance with “will do” dispositional determinants. Modern organizations now offer learning and development that is explicitly labeled as “emotional intelligence” or “emotional competence” training. In support, their leaders create and manage a working environment of flexibility, responsibility, standards, rewards, clarity, and commitment.<sup>6</sup> ■

## FURTHER READING

- Charles Ehin. 2000. *Unleashing Intellectual Capital*. Butterworth-Heinemann.
- Daniel Goleman. 1995. *Emotional Intelligence: Why It Can Matter More Than IQ*. Bantam Books.
- . 1998. *Working with Emotional Intelligence*. Bantam Books.
- . 2006. *Social Intelligence: The New Science of Social Relationships*. Bantam Books.

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<sup>6</sup> This climate determines how free staff feel to innovate unencumbered by red tape; perceptions of responsibility to the organization; the level of standards that are set; the sense of accuracy about performance feedback and the aptness of rewards; the clarity staff have about the organization’s mission, vision, and values; and the level of commitment to a common purpose.







# Understanding Complexity

In development agencies, paradigms of linear causality condition much thinking and practice. They encourage command-and-control hierarchies, centralize decision making, and dampen creativity and innovation. Globalization demands that organizations see our turbulent world as a collection of evolving ecosystems. To survive and flourish they must then be adaptable and fleet-footed. Notions of complexity offer a wealth of insights and guidance to 21st century organizations that strive to do so.



## INTRODUCTION

Lord Kelvin (1824–1907), a Scottish physicist, mathematician, engineer, and one-time President of the Royal Society—the national academy of science of the United Kingdom and the Commonwealth—is alleged to have remarked in an address to the British Association for the Advancement of Science that “There is nothing new to be discovered in physics now. All that remains is more and more precise measurement.”

Building on centuries of progress in human thought, sped by the Newtonian Revolution,<sup>1</sup> the early years of the 1900s were characterized by such declarations in Europe and North America.<sup>2</sup> (In a word, with the birth of modern calculus in the 17th century owing to Newton and Gottfried Leibnitz,<sup>3</sup> the dominant philosophy had been one of integration: from reasoning one could sum up and draw global conclusions about a system.)

Soon enough, however—*pace* Lord Kelvin, Michelson, and others—multiple transformations in environment, economy, society, polity, and technology threw up fundamental challenges to linear conceptualizations (and mankind’s desire to control the physical world). We do not stand outside the systems we study. Rather, we are an increasingly essential part of the complex patterns in which we live: our perceptions, thoughts, beliefs, and ways impact the world profoundly.

## THE END OF CERTAINTY

As one would expect, development work is not immune to ordered and reductionist thinking. Karl Marx (1818–1883) and W.W. Rostow (1916–2003), among others, strove to force development into rigid, sequential patterns. Not to be outdone, from the Second World War, development economics fired silver bullets for food aid, free trade, foreign direct investment, import substitution, industrialization, human capital investment, basic human needs, poverty alleviation, structural adjustment, sustainable development, governance, gender and development, poverty reduction, debt relief, community-driven development, and partnerships—to name a few—in succession or volley according to the changing modernist ideological stances and foci of donors, all firmly based on conceptions of Western liberal democracy.

The reasons a phenomenon defined at a high level might not explain low-level properties can be several, ranging from mere ignorance of hidden relations to theoretical uncomputability. But whatever these causes may be, a consistent issue remains—that of emergence. Over the course of the 20th century, rapid

**“For my part I know nothing with any certainty, but the sight of the stars makes me dream.”**

—Vincent van Gogh

<sup>1</sup> Isaac Newton (1642–1727), an English physicist, mathematician, astronomer, natural philosopher, alchemist, and theologian, is generally regarded as the most original and influential theorist in the history of science. In addition to his invention of infinitesimal calculus and a new theory of light and color, Newton transformed physics with his three laws of motion and the law of universal gravitation. Uncommonly, he was recognized in his lifetime for having created a revolution.

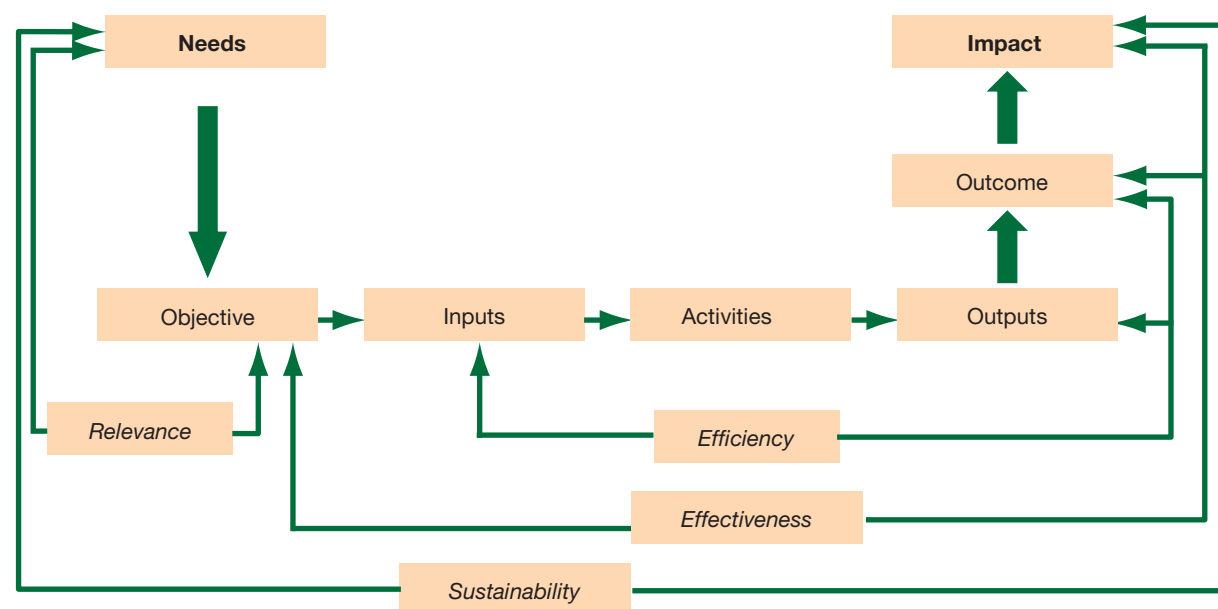
<sup>2</sup> In 1894 Albert Michelson (1852–1931), a German-American physicist and soon-to-be Nobel Laureate, had also quipped: “The more important fundamental laws and facts of physical science have all been discovered, and these are so firmly established that the possibility of their ever being supplanted in consequence of new discoveries is exceedingly remote...Many instances might be cited, but these will suffice to justify the statement that ‘our future discoveries must be looked for in the sixth place of decimals’.”

<sup>3</sup> Gottfried Leibniz (1646–1716), a German mathematician and philosopher, invented infinitesimal calculus independently of Newton—his notation has been in use since then. He also invented the binary numeral system, used by all modern computers since the 1950s.

advances in fields such as physics and biology that highlight holism, uncertainty, and nonlinearity<sup>4</sup> (and de-emphasize reductionism, predictability, and linearity) forged related, interdisciplinary intuitions and concepts that attempt to explain complex phenomena, e.g., catastrophe theory, chaos theory, co-evolution, dissipative systems, nonlinear dynamics, self-organized criticality theory, and systems thinking. In loosely bound form, they are often referred to as complexity theory (or the sciences of complexity, to emphasize their plural nature). Even though reductionist and mechanistic thinking persists in the face of now major global concerns,<sup>5</sup> interest in applying concrete and practical complexity approaches to social systems, such as how organizations strategize and change, is growing.

To date, however, the use of complexity thinking in aid and development, for instance, where it might collectively and individually help organizations promote the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness,<sup>6</sup> is still unusual and rarely older than about 10 years. Even so, complexity approaches may one day counterbalance the path dependence and “lock-in” of management practices that are embodied in the near-universal (and all too often restrictive) use of the logical framework (and the evaluations based on these). When facing volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous environments such as those that characterize development work, mono-causal explanations founded on “rational choice,” “best” specified top-down, are ever more recognized as inadequate, or at least insufficient.<sup>7</sup>

**Figure 1: The Results Chain Explained**



Source: Author.

<sup>4</sup> A nonlinear system displays no simple proportional relation between cause and effect. The weather is famously nonlinear and, therefore, diverse and unpredictable: simple changes in one part of the system produce myriads of effects throughout.

<sup>5</sup> A non-exhaustive list of world problems includes (i) population growth; (ii) natural resource depletion or degradation; (iii) pollution; (iv) climate change; (v) unequal distribution of financial resources; (vi) rising expectations in developing countries; (vii) military approaches to resolving quarrels; (viii) nuclear weapons; (ix) genocides; (x) bigotry, racism, and sexism; (xi) terrorism; and (xii) the power of multinational corporations over elected governments.

<sup>6</sup> The Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness is an international agreement to intensify efforts for harmonization, alignment, and managing for development results. Available: [www.oecd.org/document/18/0,2340,en\\_2649\\_3236398\\_35401554\\_1\\_1\\_1\\_1,00.html](http://www.oecd.org/document/18/0,2340,en_2649_3236398_35401554_1_1_1_1,00.html)

<sup>7</sup> A typical logic model might progress thus (i) certain resources are needed to operate a program; (ii) if one has access to them, one can use the resources to accomplish planned activities; (iii) if one accomplishes the planned activities, one will hopefully deliver the products or services intended; (iv) if one accomplishes the planned activities to the extent intended, participants to the program will benefit in certain ways; and (v) if the benefits to participants are achieved, certain desired changes in organizations, communities, or systems might be expected to take place. More simply: (i) identify the problem, (ii) commission studies and investigations, (iii) analyze the results, (iv) select the best option, (v) agree on the change, (vi) implement the change, and (vii) monitor and evaluate the development intervention.

**Figure 2: Challenges and Limits to Management**

Logic				Degree of Control	Challenges to Monitoring and Evaluation
Impact			What the development intervention is expected to contribute to	<div>Decreasing Control</div> <div></div>	<div>Increasing Difficulty</div> <div></div>
Outcome		What the development intervention can be expected to achieve and be accountable for			
Outputs	What is within the direct control of the development intervention's management				
Activities					
Inputs					

Source: Author.

## DEFINING COMPLEXITY

A complex system is one in which at least two parts interact dynamically to function as a whole. The parts are interconnected, and each is composed of subsystems nested within a larger one. (For instance, a person is a member of a family, which is part of a community, institution, village, province, region, country, group of countries, the earth, the solar system, our galaxy, the observable universe, and the universe.) Complex systems exhibit properties that are not obvious from the properties of their individual parts. Typically, they are characterized by (i) a number of interconnected and interdependent elements (or dimensions); (ii) local rules that apply to each element; (iii) constant movement and responses from these elements; (iv) adaptiveness so that the system adjusts to guarantee continued operation; (v) self-organization, by which new settings in the system take form spontaneously; and (vi) progression in complexity so that the system sometimes becomes larger and more sophisticated over time. Although a wide variety of systems are complex, some more or less than others depending on the range of characteristics they possess, all exhibit emergence and self-organization. Other features of complex systems are that their characteristics change over time, frequently in nonlinear ways, and that they seldom (yet every now and then) reach long-term equilibrium.

## KEY CONCEPTS OF COMPLEXITY THEORY

Complexity theory is the science of complex systems.<sup>8</sup> Its origins lie in biology, ecology, and evolution as a development

**“The theory of evolution by cumulative natural selection is the only theory we know of that is in principle capable of explaining the existence of organized complexity.”**

— Richard Dawkins

of chaos theory.<sup>9</sup> It is the theory that random events, if left to happen without interference, will settle into a complicated pattern rather than a simple one. In common parlance, complexity is often used to mean “difficult” or “convoluted,” that is, a problem where the answer is not obvious. However, when referring to complexity theory, more appropriate words to use might be “complicated” or “complex.”<sup>10</sup>

Usefully, Ben Ramalingam<sup>11</sup> and colleagues at the Overseas Development Institute have circumscribed 10 concepts of complexity, organized into the three domains of (i) complexity and systems, (ii) complexity and change, and (iii) complexity and agency. The following excerpts their paper:

- **Complexity and Systems.** These first three concepts relate to the features of systems that can be described as complex:
  1. Systems characterized by *interconnected and interdependent elements and dimensions* are a key starting point for understanding complexity theory.
  2. *Feedback processes* crucially shape how change happens within a complex system.
  3. *Emergence* describes how the behavior of systems emerges—often unpredictably—from the interaction of the parts, such that the whole is different from the sum of the parts.

<sup>8</sup> Like many other explanations, complexity theory does not present a unified perspective. But all its variations begin with the notion of complexity, be that taken literally or as a metaphor.

<sup>9</sup> The first “discoverer” of chaos was Henri Poincaré (1854–1912), a French mathematician, physicist, and philosopher of science. The problem of finding the general solution to the motion of more than two orbiting bodies in the solar system, originally known as the three-body problem, had eluded mathematicians since Newton’s time.

<sup>10</sup> For example, an iPod is a complicated system but making Annette Poulard’s famously “perfect” omelets is complex. A space rocket is a complicated system too, but the stock exchange is complex. Harking back to Poincaré, three interacting planets form a complex system.

<sup>11</sup> Ben Ramalingam and Harry Jones with Toussaint Reba and John Young. 2008. Exploring the Science of Complexity: Ideas and Implications for Development and Humanitarian Efforts. *Working Paper 285*. Overseas Development Institute. Available: [www.odi.org.uk/resources/download/583.pdf](http://www.odi.org.uk/resources/download/583.pdf)



- **Complexity and Change.** The next four concepts relate to phenomena through which complexity manifests itself:
  1. Within complex systems, relationships between dimensions are frequently *nonlinear*, i.e., when change happens, it is frequently disproportionate and unpredictable.
  2. *Sensitivity to initial conditions* highlights how small differences in the initial state of a system can lead to massive differences later; butterfly effects and bifurcations are two ways in which complex systems can change drastically over time.
  3. *Phase space* helps build a picture of the dimensions of a system, and how they change over time. This enables understanding of how systems move and evolve over time.
  4. *Chaos and edge of chaos* describe the order underlying the seemingly random behaviors exhibited by certain complex systems.
- **Complexity and Agency.** The final three concepts relate to the notion of adaptive agents, and how their behaviors are manifested in complex systems:
  1. *Adaptive agents* react to the system and to each other, leading to a number of phenomena.
  2. *Self-organization* characterizes a particular form of emergent property that can occur in systems of adaptive agents.
  3. *Co-evolution* describes how, within a system of adaptive agents, co-evolution occurs, such that the overall system and the agents within it evolve together, or co-evolve, over time.

## COMPLEXITY THEORY, AID, AND DEVELOPMENT

Development is a complex, adaptive process but—with exceptions—development work has not been conducted as such. It was suggested earlier that development assistance often follows a linear approach to achieving outputs and outcomes, underpinned by economic consensus among Western liberal democracies. That approach is guided by processes (and associated compliance standards) applied with limited and out-of-date insights on dynamic operational contexts. Any planning process is based on assumptions<sup>12</sup>—some will be predictable, others wishful. If the assumptions are based on invalid theories of change (including cause-and-effect relationships) and on inappropriate tools, methods, and approaches derived from those, development agencies jeopardize the impacts they seek to realize.<sup>13</sup>

Yet, even culture theory draws insufficient conclusions about what complexity thinking could mean for development interventions. Some hard questions remain. How might emerging intuitions from complexity approaches, combined with field practice, systemically (rather than through patchwork approaches) reshape assumptions about the design of development assistance, improve reading of signals, and foster appropriate adapting of actions? What might be the implications of a shift from compliance with external standards to investing in capacities for navigating complexity?

**“Human beings, viewed as behaving systems, are quite simple. The apparent complexity of our behavior over time is largely a reflection of the complexity of the environment in which we find ourselves.”**

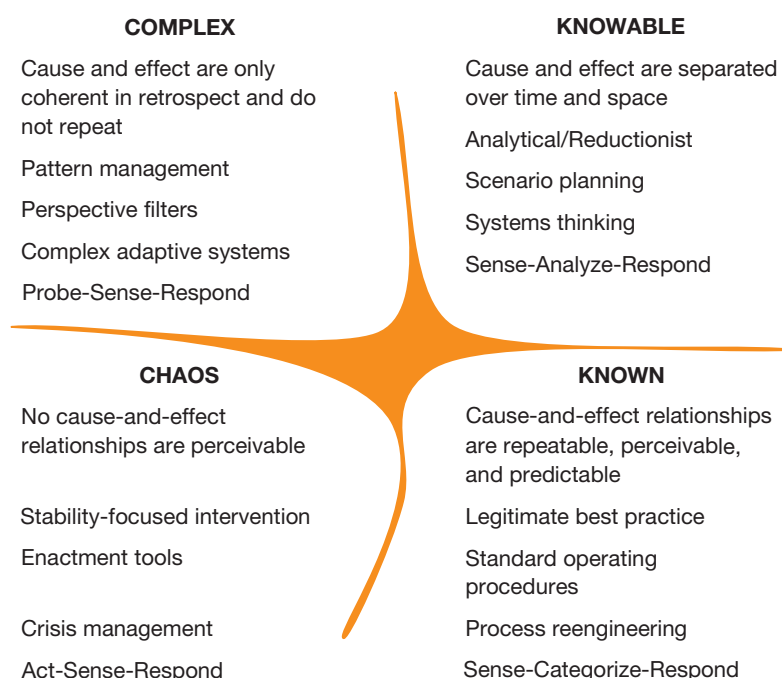
—Herbert Simon

*Exploring the Science of Complexity* gives lenses with which to distinguish, study, and see differently, the deeper realities that development agencies must grapple with. (Some hold that the rise of complexity theory, which questions the concepts and assumptions of Newtonian science, represents a paradigm shift in thinking.) Complexity approaches can potentially enhance insight, creativity, and innovation among development leaders and practitioners and facilitate navigation of dense webs of connections and relationships. Specifically, *Exploring the Science of Complexity* calls for rethinking five key areas of development assistance: (i) the tools, methods, and approaches for planning, monitoring, learning from, and evaluating;<sup>14</sup> (ii) the nature of the processes utilized; (iii) the dynamics of the changes triggered; (iv) the role of beneficiaries and partner organizations; and (v) the wider contexts and the real influence. To this intent, it invites development agencies to (i) cultivate collective intellectual openness to ask new, potentially rich but challenging questions about their missions and work; (ii) exercise collective intellectual and methodological restraint to accept the limitations of complexity thinking as a fresh, potentially valuable set of ideas; (iii) be humble and honest about the scope of what can be achieved through “outsider” interventions, about the types of mistakes that are repeatedly made, and about the reasons such mistakes are made so often; and (iv) develop the individual, organizational, and political courage to face up to the implications of complexity approaches.

<sup>12</sup> Cynthia Kurtz and David Snowden identified three basic, universal assumptions prevalent in organizational decision support and strategy: assumptions of order, of rational choice, and of intent. See Kurtz, C., and D. Snowden. 2003. The New Dynamics of Strategy: Sense-Making in a Complex and Complicated World. *IBM Systems Journal*. 42 (3), pp. 462–483.

<sup>13</sup> The rhetoric of local ownership, participation, empowerment, institutional reform, and aid effectiveness, for example, should not be at odds with actual development assistance practices.

<sup>14</sup> The tools, methods, and approaches that support complexity thinking include culture theory, alignment interest and influence matrixes, learning partnerships, outcome mapping, scenario planning, social network analysis, and storytelling. Training in their use should be promulgated. Collections of other approaches should be built.

**Figure 3: Sense-Making in a Complex and Complicated World**

Source: Cynthia Kurtz and David Snowden. 2003. The New Dynamics of Strategy: Sense-Making in a Complex and Complicated World. *IBM Systems Journal*. 42 (3). pp. 462–483.

In like fashion, the Cynefin framework<sup>15</sup> helps make sense of a range of unspecified problems, preferably collectively. The framework has five domains—four of which are named and a fifth central area, which is the domain of disorder. The right-hand domains are those of order; the left-hand domains are those of un-order.

The potential benefits of complexity theory in development work are that, by understanding what it means for a system to be complex in a complex environment, stakeholders (including policy makers) can work with those concepts and not block them unintentionally. One may then use notions of complexity to understand the problem space (better, the space of possibilities) when addressing seemingly intractable, difficult issues and create co-evolving enabling environments and, hopefully, more positive futures. Thus, complexity theory can be used as an explanatory framework, as a different way of seeing and thinking, and as a different language and set of concepts.

Still, where complexity meets development, a framework that helps decision makers determine the prevailing operating context comes in handy. Building on the Cynefin framework reproduced above, David Snowden and Mary Boone recently intuited how effective leaders can learn to shift decision-making styles in simple, complicated, complex, and chaotic environments. ■

**“I know that most men, including those at ease with problems of the greatest complexity, can seldom accept even the simplest and most obvious truth if it be such as would oblige them to admit the falsity of conclusions which they have delighted in explaining to colleagues, which they have proudly taught to others, and which they have woven, thread by thread, into the fabric of their lives.”**

—Leo Tolstoy

<sup>15</sup> Cynefin is a Welsh word, commonly translated into English as habitat, place, or haunt. (Related adjectives are acquainted, accustomed, or familiar.) The Cynefin framework was developed by David Snowden and his collaborators to explore the relationship between man, experience, and context and propose new approaches to communicating, decision making, policy making, and knowledge management in complex environments.

**Table: Decisions in Multiple Contexts**

	Contextual Characteristics	Executive Decisions	Danger Signals	Responses to Danger Signals
<b>Simple Contexts</b> The Domain of Good Practice (Sense, Categorize, Respond)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Repeating patterns and consistent events</li> <li>Clear cause-and-effect relationships evident to everyone; right answer exists</li> <li>Known knowns</li> <li>Fact-based management</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure that proper processes are in place.</li> <li>Delegate.</li> <li>Use good practices.</li> <li>Communicate in clear, direct ways.</li> <li>Understand that extensive interactive communication may not be necessary.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Complacency and comfort</li> <li>Desire to make complex problems simple</li> <li>Entrained thinking</li> <li>No challenge of received wisdom</li> <li>Over-reliance on good practice if context shifts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Create communication channels to challenge orthodoxy.</li> <li>Stay connected without micromanaging.</li> <li>Do not assume things are simple.</li> <li>Recognize both the value and the limitations of good practice.</li> </ul>
<b>Complicated Contexts</b> The Domain of Experts (Sense, Analyze, Respond)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Expert diagnosis required</li> <li>Cause-and-effect relationships discoverable but not immediately apparent to everyone; more than one right answer possible</li> <li>Known unknowns</li> <li>Fact-based management</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Create panels of experts.</li> <li>Listen to conflicting advice.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Experts overconfident in their own solutions or in the efficacy of past solutions</li> <li>Analysis paralysis</li> <li>Expert panels</li> <li>Viewpoints of non-experts excluded</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Encourage external and internal stakeholders to challenge expert opinions to combat entrained thinking.</li> <li>Use experiments and games to force people to think outside the familiar.</li> </ul>
<b>Complex Contexts</b> The Domain of Emergence (Probe, Sense, Respond)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Flux and unpredictability</li> <li>No right answers; emergent, instructive patterns</li> <li>Unknown unknowns</li> <li>Many competing ideas</li> <li>A need for creative and innovative approaches</li> <li>Pattern-based leadership</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Create environments and experiments that allow patterns to emerge.</li> <li>Increase levels of interaction and communication.</li> <li>Use methods that can help generate ideas: open up discussion (as through large group methods); set barriers; stimulate attractors; encourage dissent and diversity; and manage starting conditions and monitor for emergence.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Temptation to fall back into habitual, command-and-control mode</li> <li>Temptation to look for facts rather than allow patterns to emerge</li> <li>Desire for accelerated resolution of problems or exploitation of opportunities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Be patient and allow time for reflection.</li> <li>Use approaches that encourage interaction so patterns can emerge.</li> </ul>
<b>Chaotic Contexts</b> The Domain of Rapid Response (Act, Sense, Respond)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>High turbulence</li> <li>No clear cause-and-effect relationships, so no point in looking for right answers</li> <li>Unknowables</li> <li>Many decisions to make and no time to think</li> <li>High tension</li> <li>Pattern-based leadership</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Look for what works instead of seeking right answers.</li> <li>Take immediate action to reestablish order (command and control).</li> <li>Provide clear, direct communication.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Applying a command-and-control approach longer than needed</li> <li>"Cult of the leader"</li> <li>Missed opportunity for innovation</li> <li>Chaos unabated</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Set up mechanisms (such as parallel teams) to take advantage of opportunities afforded by a chaotic environment.</li> <li>Encourage advisers to challenge your point of view once the crisis has abated.</li> <li>Work to shift the context from chaotic to complex.</li> </ul>

Source: Adapted from David Snowden and Mary Boone. 2007. A Leader's Framework for Decision Making. *Harvard Business Review*. November. pp. 69–76.

## FURTHER READING

ADB. 2009. *Learning for Change in ADB*. Manila. Available: [www.adb.org/documents/books/learning-for-change/default.asp](http://www.adb.org/documents/books/learning-for-change/default.asp)

Ben Ramalingam and Harry Jones with Toussaint Reba and John Young. 2008. Exploring the Science of

Complexity: Ideas and Implications for Development and Humanitarian Efforts. *Working Paper 285*. Overseas Development Institute. Available: [www.odi.org.uk/resources/download/583.pdf](http://www.odi.org.uk/resources/download/583.pdf)

Cognitive Edge. [www.cognitive-edge.com/](http://www.cognitive-edge.com/)



## MANAGEMENT TECHNIQUES

Leadership is the process of working out the right things to do. Management is the process of doing things right.



# Value Cycles for Development Outcomes

Development work is a knowledge-intensive process that is fed by knowledge services and knowledge solutions. Projects are the primary mechanism by which strategic change is brought about. Value cycles can maximize their potential through delivery platforms.



## RATIONALE

More and more, development work is understood to be a knowledge-intensive process that is fed by knowledge services and knowledge solutions. And, for the most, projects<sup>1</sup> (and programs) are the primary mechanism by which strategic change is brought about. Projects and knowledge are thus mutually dependent: to deliver development outcomes projects must be enriched by knowledge; and new knowledge (that should be captured and leveraged) must in turn be generated by projects. Projects are key vehicles that can support a wealth of

opportunities for knowledge generation and sharing: virtuous knowledge cycles must be sought that maximize their potential through delivery platforms (including tools, methods, and approaches).

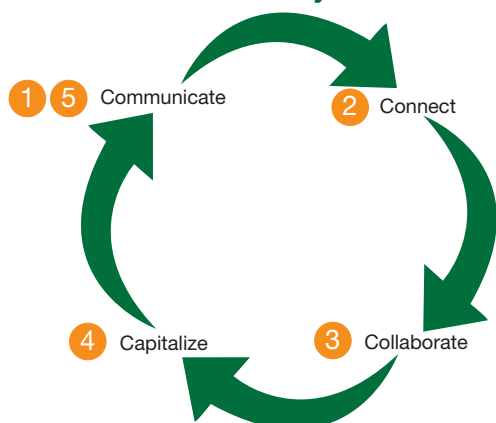
## VALUE CYCLES

The value cycle<sup>2</sup> is a conceptual framework depicting how organizations can build a continuous momentum for creating value. Importantly, it integrates internal (comparative advantage, competitive advantage, and measures of organizational performance) and external perspectives (value proposition, customer perceived value, and market-based measures of performance). For effect, values cycles must be integrated in strategy—in the private (and public) sector, that is commonly articulated by a vision, governing objective, performance scorecard, priorities, sustainability commitments, culture, and purpose.

## THE FIVE-C VALUE CYCLE

A consistent value cycle needs to be occurring throughout all stages of the project cycle.<sup>3</sup> It should generate and communicate benefits while remaining aligned with the projected impact of the project. The Five-C Value Cycle offers an effective way to do enhance development outcomes. Communicating at the beginning of the cycle is specifically targeted at engaging stakeholders and resources. Once engaged, they are encouraged to connect and build relationships to ensure a high level of collaboration. As desired outputs are accomplished, the project

**Figure 1: The Five-C Value Cycle**



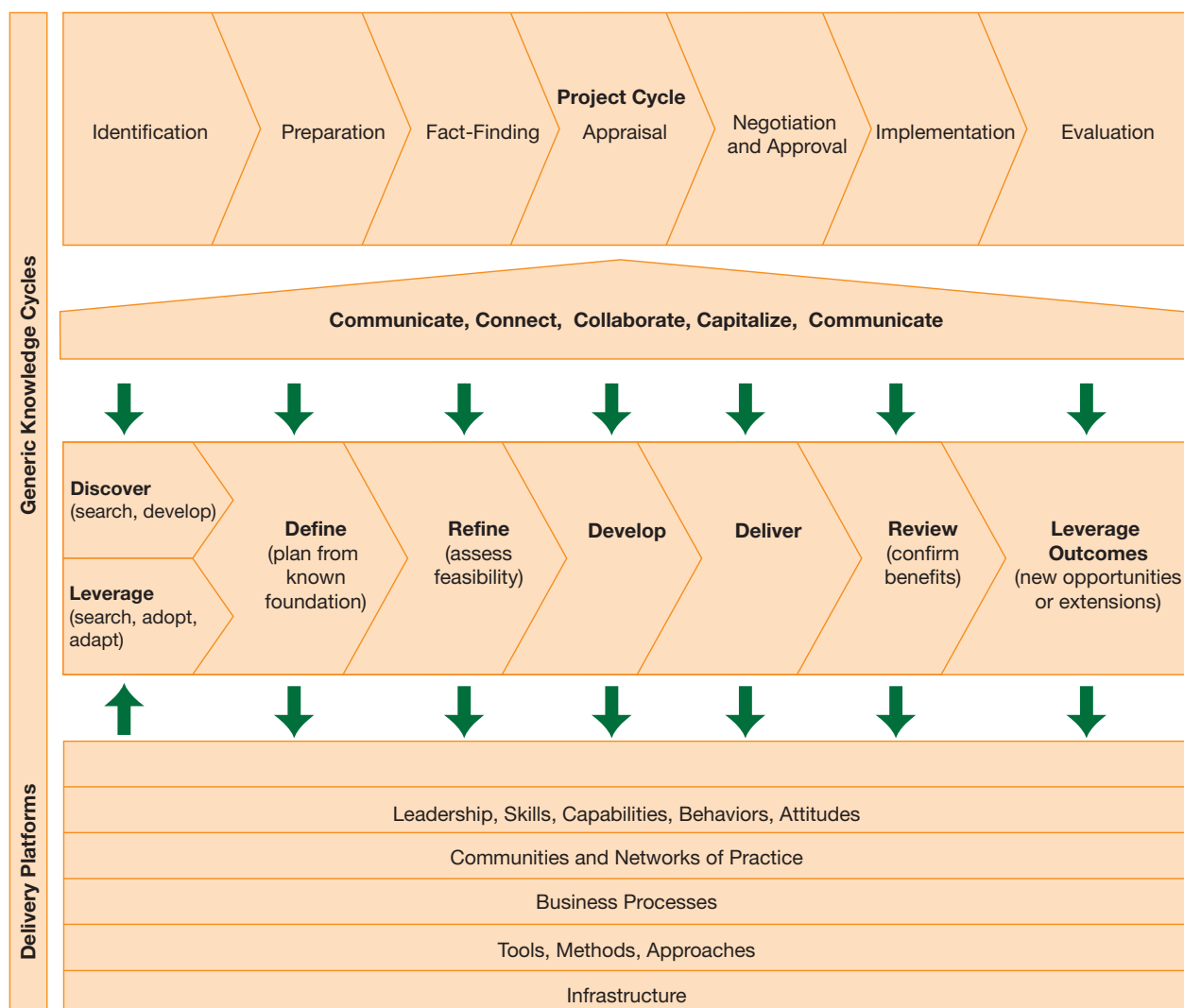
Source: Arthur Shelley. 2009. *Being a Successful Knowledge Leader: What Knowledge Practitioners Need to Know to Make a Difference*. Ark Group.

<sup>1</sup> By definition, a project is a finite endeavor—having specific start and completion dates—undertaken to deliver a particular impact and outcomes, with related outputs, inputs, and activities, usually to bring about beneficial change or added value. The finite characteristic of projects stands in contrast to processes: they are repetitive, permanent or semi-permanent, structured management, operational, or supporting activities to produce products or services.

<sup>2</sup> Value cycles are reminiscent of value chains, a concept from business management first described by Michael Porter in 1985. A value chain is a chain of activities. A product passes through all the activities that make up the chain in sequence and, at each activity, the product gains value. The chain is made dynamic by upgrading, value chain governance, the power exercised by firms in their relationships with each other, inter-firm cooperation and competition, and transfer of knowledge and learning within and between firms. The dynamic elements of the chain all play a role in determining its performance.

<sup>3</sup> In development agencies, in the case of lending products, the seven major stages are (i) identification, (ii) preparation, (iii) loan fact-finding, (iv) appraisal, (v) loan negotiation and board approval, (vi) implementation, and (vii) evaluation. "Processing" refers to work conducted from loan fact-finding to board approval.



**Figure 2: Value Cycles for Development Outcomes**

Source: Adapted from Arthur Shelley. 2009. *Being a Successful Knowledge Leader: What Knowledge Practitioners Need to Know to Make a Difference*. Ark Group.

team needs to ensure that they are capitalized—that is, the promised benefits are delivered to the intended beneficiaries. Successes are shared by communicating widely. (Shortcomings or failures are communicated too, respectfully, to derive lessons, highlight possible solutions, mitigate potential risks, and reduce future errors.) ■

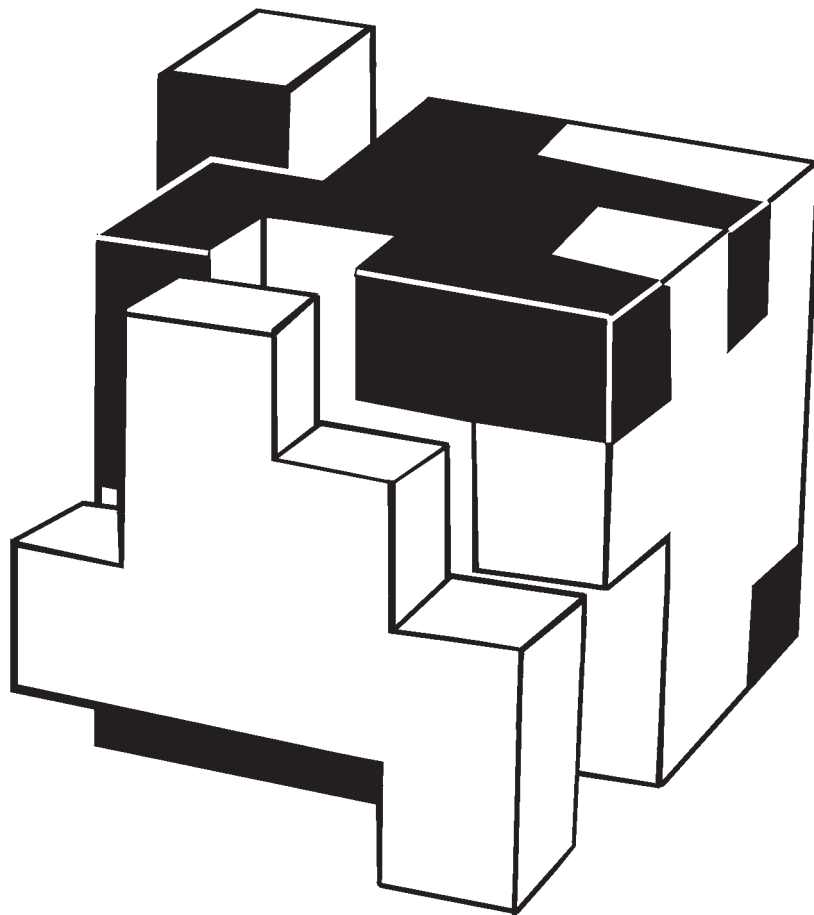
### FURTHER READING

Arthur Shelley. 2009. *Being a Successful Knowledge Leader: What Knowledge Practitioners Need to Know to Make a Difference*. Ark Group.



### MANAGEMENT TECHNIQUES

Leadership is the process of working out the right things to do. Management is the process of doing things right.



# **Collaboration Mechanisms**



# Action Learning

Action learning is a structured method that enables small groups to work regularly and collectively on complicated problems, take action, and learn as individuals and as a team while doing so.

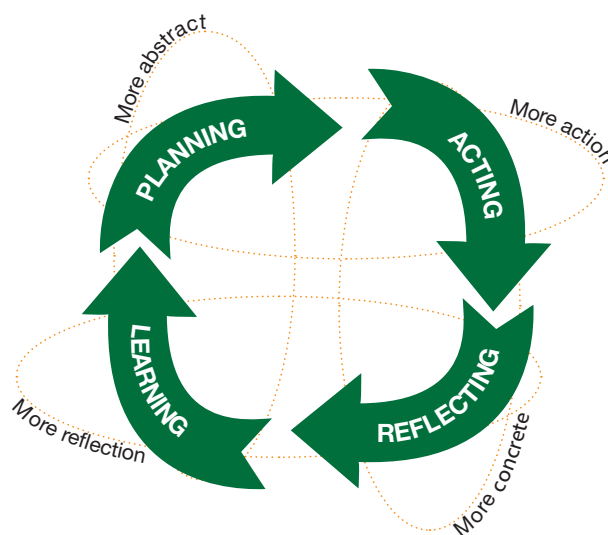


## RATIONALE

Conventional approaches to learning hinge on the presentation of knowledge and skills. Then again, knowledge is revealed through methods of questioning amid risk, confusion, and opportunity. Reginald Revans, the originator of action learning, recommended that one should keep away from experts with prefabricated answers.<sup>1</sup> Rather, people should become aware

of their lack of knowledge and be prepared to explore their ignorance with suitable questions and help from others: finding the right questions rather than the right answers is important, and it is one's perception of a problem, one's evaluation of what is to be gained by solving it, and one's estimation of the resources available to solve it that supply the springs of human action.<sup>2</sup> Figure 1 depicts the cycle of learning.

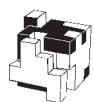
**Figure 1: Learning from Experience**



Source: Adapted from David Kolb. 1984. *Experiential Learning: Experience as the Source of Learning and Development*. Prentice Hall.

<sup>1</sup> Revans distinguished cleverness, i.e., knowledge, and wisdom. He described the formula  $L = P + Q$  where  $L$  is learning;  $P$  is programmed, i.e., taught or read, knowledge; and  $Q$  is questioning to create insight.  $Q$  uses four major questions: where? who? when? what?; and three minor questions: why? how many? how much? From this, he demonstrated that powerful learning comes from people learning with and from others.

<sup>2</sup> High-level questions theorize, reflect, and hypothesize. Low-level questions seek factual answers and tend to converge in that they have correct answers. High-level questions require people to make connections and to engage in application, analysis, interpretation, or evaluation of ideas. Examples include: Are you in agreement with the group's answer? What do you think would happen if ...? What is the difference between ... and ...? How are ... and ... similar? Why do you believe these differences or similarities occur? Low-level questions require people to recall information that has been presented or to retrieve information from memory.



## DEFINITION

Action learning is an educational process by which a person studies his or her own actions and experience to improve performance. Put simply, it is about solving problems and getting things done. In action learning, a small group of 5–8 persons (called action learning set) meets regularly for a day or half a day over at least 6 months and works collectively on a problem faced in ongoing practice.<sup>3</sup> The action learning set helps a “presenter” work on a problem through supportive but challenging questioning. It encourages a deeper understanding of the issues involved, a reflective reassessment of the problem, and an exploration of ways forward. (Action learning requires that actions be agreed at the end of each meeting.) By so doing, it provides a structured way of working that provide the discipline we often need to learn from what we do and improve practice as a result.

## APPLICATIONS

The most common applications of action learning are in professional and managerial learning and development, namely

- A work-based project or program in which set members are involved and for which they have a level of responsibility and are therefore able to realistically influence by their actions.
- An issue that concerns how set members operate in their work context, and one that they wish to improve and that could benefit from the support and challenge of the other members.

Action learning is not useful if the task that a set member is working on is a technical puzzle with a limited number of correct solutions. In such instances, it is better to tackle that the issue through consultation with experts, research, or training.

## BENEFITS

Action learning sets have been used by civil and nongovernment organizations. They

- Increase awareness and enable individuals to identify personal development challenges.
- Develop self-confidence and readiness to take responsibility and initiative.
- Help people relate to and communicate and network with others more effectively.
- Provide structured peer support.
- Enable more disciplined ways of working in powerful teams.
- Enable individuals and teams to learn while working.<sup>4</sup>
- Build leadership competencies.
- Develop systems thinking, creativity, flexibility, and problem-solving skills.
- Foster the emergence of corporate cultures that can handle change and learn.
- Support innovation.

Still, for organizations to really feel the benefits of action learning, there must be will to support participation in sets and respect for their outcomes. The disciplines and behaviors that encourage action learning are those of a learning organization.

Peter Senge catalogues the attributes of learning organizations as personal mastery, shared vision, mental models, team learning, and systems thinking (the fifth discipline that integrates the other four).

## KEY PRINCIPLES OF ACTION LEARNING

The key principles of action learning are that

- Learning begins with not knowing.
- Individuals and groups who assume responsibility stand the best chance of taking actions that will make a difference.
- Learning involves both programmed knowledge and questioning insight. Learning should be greater than the rate of change.

## PROCESS

Action learning brings together small groups of participants with the following intentions. Figure 2 depicts the action learning process as cyclical: it begins at the top of the diagram and moves round systematically, giving each set member the opportunity to present a problem and comment on others.

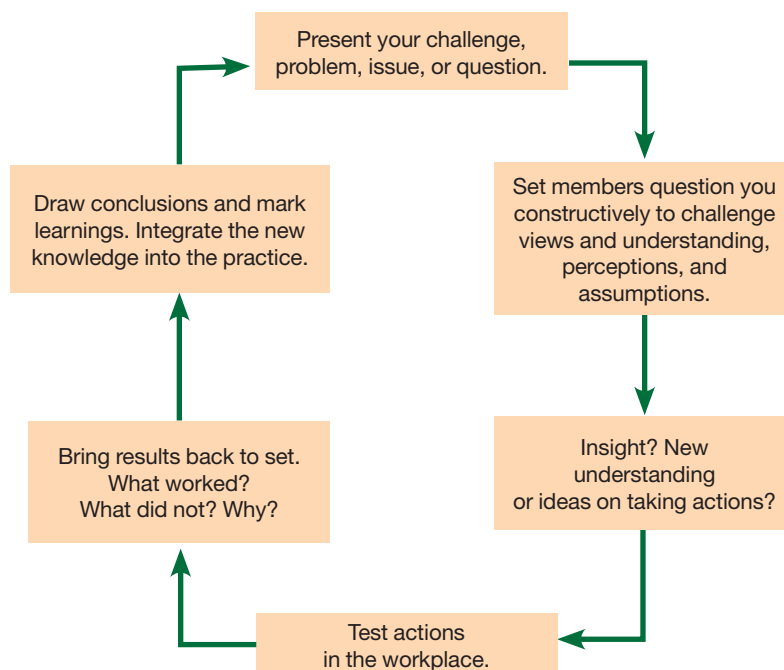
A typical set meeting might run like this:<sup>5</sup>

- Before the meeting, each set member thinks about the work-based issues he or she wishes to bring to the set.
- Set members agree to set aside the necessary time for the meeting. It should be held where they will be free from distraction.
- The facilitator might remind set members of the ground rules established during the formation of the set and may recap the key principles of the methodology.
- The set members check-in and those who had an opportunity to explore their issue in the previous set report to the others on actions taken since the last meeting.
- One of the set members is given airtime for about 1 hour. This begins with the member taking 5–10 uninterrupted minutes to outline the work-based issue that he or she is bringing to the set members. Then, the other members ask questions of clarification, move into reflective and analytical questions, and towards the end question future action.
- During this process, the facilitator may sometimes “stop” the set to raise awareness on matters of process, for example, if set members are giving advice packaged as questions.
- At the end of the airtime, the set member presenting the issue provides feedback on how he or she experienced the process and what learning took place. Set members also offer observations and learnings on both process and content.
- The process of airtime is repeated for as many set members as possible in the time available. (This is normally two members in a half-day or four in a full day meeting.)
- The meeting may conclude with the completion of an action review sheet that aims to capture key learnings and action plans from the meeting. The logistics of the next meeting are also agreed.

<sup>3</sup> Revans believed that those best able to help in developing the self are those comrades in adversity who also struggle to understand themselves.

<sup>4</sup> Learning can take place at several levels. They include learning about the wider organization of which the set members are a part, learning about group processes, learning about the issue being presented, learning about oneself, the way one works and interacts with issues and people, and learning how to learn.

<sup>5</sup> This section draws from BOND Guidance Note No. 5. 2004. *Action Learning Sets*. Available: [www.bond.org.uk/data/files/als.pdf](http://www.bond.org.uk/data/files/als.pdf)

**Figure 2: The Action Learning Process**

Source: Adapted from National Primary and Care Trust Development Programme. 2008. *Welcome to Action Learning*. Available: [www.natpact.nhs.uk/cms.php?pic=274](http://www.natpact.nhs.uk/cms.php?pic=274)

## FACILITATION

A significant aspect of action learning is the “unlearning” of all-too-common habits of jumping from problem to solution and offering advice. For this, it is necessary to adhere to a disciplined methodology of good listening and questioning. A skilled and experienced facilitator can help to achieve this. Specifically, a facilitator would help create safe space for honest discussion, remind set members of the methodology, model helpful questioning, ensure that the questioning moves around the action learning cycle at an appropriate pace, draw attention to issues of process, and act as timekeeper.

## TIPS

Action learning is most effective when the commitment is voluntary. It should also focus on real-life, practice-related problems that are open-ended in nature and do not have

a right or wrong answer. Importantly, action learning sets should be clear about the objective; engage the support of management; decide on selection criteria for set members; commit regular time; set dates for meetings and workshops; make sure there is some energy; be honest with themselves and others; respect others and their viewpoint; learn to listen; ask helpful questions;<sup>6</sup> refrain from giving advice; follow the action learning cycle; give individual airtime to others; take responsibility for their actions; and decide early on how the program will be evaluated, who will be involved, and how the results and future actions will be communicated more widely. ■

## FURTHER READING

World Institute for Action Learning. 2008.  
Available: [www.wial.org](http://www.wial.org)

<sup>6</sup> Examples include: What other questions does this question raise for us? What is it that we do not understand about this situation? What would someone who had a very different set of beliefs than we do say about this situation? Why did you draw those conclusions? How does x affect y? In your opinion, which is best, x or y? And why? What are the strengths and weakness of ...?



### COLLABORATION MECHANISMS

When working with others, efforts sometimes turn out to be less than the sum of the parts. Too often, not enough attention is paid to facilitating effective collaborative practices.



# Appreciative Inquiry

Appreciative inquiry is the process of facilitating positive change in organizations. Its basic assumption is uncomplicated: every organization has something that works well. Appreciative inquiry is therefore an exciting generative approach to organizational development. At a higher level, it is also a way of being and seeing.



## RATIONALE

Most organizational change processes are based on problem-solving. We ask “what is the problem?” but in so doing, focus energy on what we want less of. We then work to fix things (and keep finding problems). However, organizations change in the direction in which they inquire. Appreciative inquiry is based on the following propositions:

- Organizations are not machines.
- Organizations are a social reality—that reality is co-constructed.
- Important organizational processes, e.g., communicating, decision making, and managing conflict, hinge on how the people involved make meaning out of their interactions, not so much on the skillful application of techniques.
- Endeavors to identify or develop the right formula for successful change are often misguided—one cannot treat social reality as if it were objective.

Every organization has something that works right, even if only in small quantities. Hence, it might be easier to foster organizational effectiveness by focusing on what one wants more (not what one wants less of). Getting people to inquire into the best examples of what they want more of creates a momentum toward the creation of more positive organizations. Of necessity, such inquiries should be appreciative, applicable, provocative, and collaborative.<sup>1</sup> To sum up, an organization that tries to discover what is best in itself will find more and more that is good: its discoveries will help build a future where the best becomes more common.

## DEFINITION

Appreciative inquiry is a relatively new form of action research that originated in the United States in the mid-1980s and is now

being used around the world. It studies the positive attributes of organizations to create new conversations among people as they work together for organizational renewal. It involves in its broadest focus the systematic discovery of what gives life to a human system when it is most alive, most effective, and most capable in environmental, economic, societal, political, and technological terms. It involves, in a central way, the art and practice of asking questions that strengthen a system’s capacity to apprehend, anticipate, and heighten positive potential. It is based on two assumptions: first, organizations always move in the direction of the questions their members ask and the things they talk about; second, energy for positive change is created when organizations engage continually in remembering and analyzing circumstances when they were at their best rather than focusing on problems and how they can be solved. The approach invites organizations to spend time creating a common vision for their desired future and developing the images and language to bring that vision to life.

## PROCESS

Appreciative inquiry is usually worked out by using a 4-D Cycle.<sup>2</sup>

- **Discovery:** People talk to one another, often via structured interviews, to discover the times when their organization is at its best. These stories are told as richly as possible.
- **Dream:** The dream phase is commonly run as a large group conference with the help of facilitators. People are encouraged to envision the organization as though the peak moments identified in the discovery phase were the norm rather than the exception.
- **Design:** A team is empowered to go away and design ways to create the organization dreamed in the large group conference.

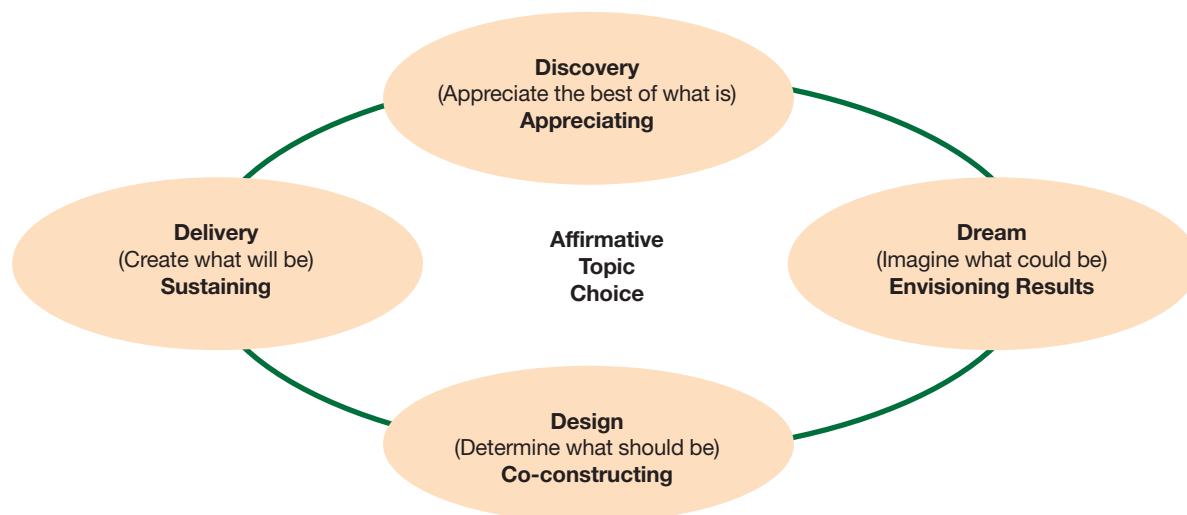
<sup>1</sup> Appreciation means looking for the positive core of an organization and seeking to use that as a foundation for future growth. Applicability means that inquiry is grounded in stories of what has actually taken place in the past and is therefore essentially practical. Provocation means inviting people to take some risks in the way they imagine the future and to redesign their organization to bring that about. Collaboration means involving the whole organization, or a representative cross-section of it, so that all voices can be heard and everyone’s contribution valued.

<sup>2</sup> The 4-D Cycle is not the only way of thinking about the process of appreciative inquiry. Some favor the 4-I Model of initiation, inquiry, imagination, and innovation.

- **Delivery:** The final phase delivers the dream and the new design. It is one of experimentation and improvisation. Teams are formed to follow up on the design elements and

to continue the appreciative process. This phase may itself contain more small-scale appreciative inquiries into specific aspects of organizational life.

**Figure: The 4D Cycle of Appreciative Inquiry**



Source: Author.

**Table: A Generic Appreciative Interview Questionnaire**

Think of a peak experience or high point in your work or experience in your organization.

In that experience, think about the things you valued most about yourself, the nature of your work, and your organization itself.

Think about the core factors that give life to your organization, viz., the really positive values it can build upon.

What three wishes would you like to have that would heighten the vitality and health of your organization?

Source: Author.

## APPLICATIONS

Appreciative inquiry can help

- Build a common vision where one is lacking.
- Challenge preconceived notions of what might be by locating the best of what already exists.
- Discover, understand, and amplify the positive forces that exist in organizations.
- Create openness and rapport between people and groups where a negative work climate has prevailed.
- Forge new approaches to human resource issues that will be accepted by staff and lead to positive change.
- Provide an alternative to conventional team building processes.
- Demonstrate the power and value of teamwork by high-

lighting ways in which teams give life to organizations.

- Open up opportunities for continuous organizational improvement by illuminating the principles, core values, and exemplary practices that support successful teams.
- Develop communities in various ways. ■

## FURTHER READING

David Cooperrider, Diana Whitney, and Jacqueline Stavros. 2007. *Appreciative Inquiry Handbook*. San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler.

Appreciative Inquiry Commons. 2008. Available: <http://appreciativeinquiry.case.edu/>



## COLLABORATION MECHANISMS

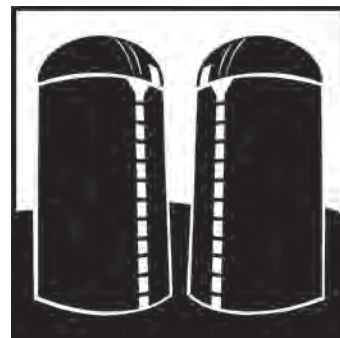
When working with others, efforts sometimes turn out to be less than the sum of the parts. Too often, not enough attention is paid to facilitating effective collaborative practices.





# Bridging Organizational Silos

To develop and deliver products and services, large organizations rely on teams. Yet, the defining characteristics of these often hamper collaboration among different parts of the organization. The root cause is conflict: it must be accepted then actively managed. Promoting effective cross-functional teams demands that an enabling environment be built for that.



## WHAT'S IN A WORD?

A silo is a tall, self-contained cylindrical structure that is used to store commodities such as grain after a harvest. It is also a figure of speech for organizational entities—and their management teams—that lack the desire or motivation to coordinate (at worst, even communicate) with other entities in the same organization. Wide recognition of the metaphor intimates that structural barriers in sizable organizations often cause units to work against one another.<sup>1</sup> silos, politics, and turf wars are often mentioned in the same breath.

An organization is a social arrangement to pursue a collective intent.<sup>2</sup> Coordination, and the requisite communication it implies, is fundamental to organizational performance toward that. Yet, many organizations grapple with the challenge of connecting the subsystems they have devised to enhance specific contributing functions. Here and there, organizational, spatial,

and social boundaries impede—when they do not block—the flows of knowledge needed to make full use of capabilities. High costs are borne from duplication of effort, inconsistencies, and inefficiencies. Everywhere, large organizations must move from managing silos to managing systems.

## ENTER THE MATRIX

For 100 years, (fully or semi-) autonomous organizational arrangements have been designed to manage complexity, keep products and services close to clients, and hold managers accountable. (In the 1970s and 1980s, interest in matrix structures, be they in functional, balanced, or project form, mushroomed.)<sup>3</sup> To this day, multiple command structures are found in most large organizations, even where traditional departmental structures—themselves tall chimneys—hold sway. This is testimony to the perceived effectiveness of such

<sup>1</sup> Specifically, three types of boundaries can be distinguished: (i) organizational, e.g., business units, functional memberships; (ii) spatial, e.g., office locations, inter-office distances; and (iii) social, e.g., gender, tenure (pay grades, job ranks). Of the three, the most widespread are termed product silos—that is, business units defined by product or service offering—and country silos, meaning, geographic silos demarcated by, say, country or region. In 2006, a study of a large structurally, functionally, geographically, and strategically diverse company that analysed more than 100 million electronic mail messages and over 60 million electronic calendar entries for a sample of more than 30,000 employees over a 3-month period revealed surprisingly little interaction across the three boundaries. Communication patterns were extremely hierarchical: in short, most people tended to communicate with others in their group or with peers. (Women were the exception: they played key “boundary spanning” roles.) See Adam Kleinbaum, Toby Stuart, and Michael Tushman. 2008. Communication (and Coordination?) in a Modern, Complex Organization. Harvard Business School. *Working Paper* No. 009-004. Available: [www.hbs.edu/research/pdf/09-004.pdf](http://www.hbs.edu/research/pdf/09-004.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> It helps to think of organizations as systems. A system is a group of interacting, interrelated, or interdependent elements that form a complex whole. In an organization, inputs are processed to produce outputs toward outcomes that, in combination, deliver the impact the organization desires. Obviously, rapport among the subsystems, e.g., departments, divisions, offices, teams, programs, etc., involving feedback, insight, and disclosure is essential to ensure they synergize. The processes that link the subsystems are typically defined by corporate values, policies, procedures, and rules.

<sup>3</sup> The matrix is a grid-like, multiple command structure that, in theory, allows organizations to target multiple business goals; leverage large resources while staying small and task-focused; enable quick transfer of inputs; facilitate the management of information through lateral communication channels; develop economies of scale; encourage creativity and innovation; and speed responses to changes in the external environment. In opposition, the matrix violates the principles that authority should equal responsibility and that personnel should report to a single manager; can create ambiguity and conflict; increases management and administrative costs; and raises the likelihood of resistance to change as personnel can associate the matrix with loss of status, authority, and control over their traditional domains. Notwithstanding, organizations continue to adopt the matrix because they believe its strengths outweigh its weaknesses. See Thomas Sy and Laura D’Annunzio. 2005. Challenges and Strategies of Matrix Organizations: Top-Level and Mid-Level Managers’ Perspectives. *Human Resource Planning*. 28 (1). pp. 39–48.

**Table 1: A Case of Competition, Not Collaboration**

Question	Marketing's Answer
Why don't the marketing teams work together?	We don't have time.
But when you do have time?	Our products are not related.
But you sell to a common set of customers?	We are all structured differently.
So if you were structured in the same way, you would work together?	Well, no, because we all sell through the same sales force, so I need to maximize my share of voice.
So if you win, others lose?	Yes. I'm interested in getting my products sold, even at the expense of others.

Source: Boston Consulting Group. 2003. *A Survivor's Guide to Organization Redesign*. Available: 209.83.147.85/impact\_expertise/publications/files/survivors\_guide\_organization\_redesign\_jan2003.pdf

arrangements (even if few organizations track matrix structure performance and fewer still examine the human dimensions of operating and managing in the matrix).<sup>4</sup> Still, silo power misaligns goals, dilutes roles and responsibilities, makes for ambiguous authority, leads to resource misallocation, breeds defensive personnel, and fosters a culture whereby the incentive is to maximize the performance of the silo, not that of the organization. Given frequent emphasis on silo-level metrics, monitoring, and management; the use of independent insights and toolsets across individual silos supporting a product or service; lack of shared understanding of service typologies; and the absence of coherent end-to-end views, silos cannot easily recognize corporate-level opportunities. (Indeed, they may even stand in the way of leveraging success where it occurs.)

In spite of that, the objective should not be to tear down silos by centralizing and standardizing—even though some of that may be part of the solution.<sup>5</sup> In the name of performance improvements, the organizational designs that engender silos are usually the result of earnest attempts to identify the right business issues, pinpoint the right underlying obstacles, adopt the right design characteristics, and implement change the right way. And so, in general, silos do not exist because something was intentionally done: they come about because something was left undone, that is, the provision of compelling motives, means, and opportunities for personnel to come together. The idea, then, should be to replace competition with collaboration. Successful matrix (but also traditional) organizations take

care to communicate a clear, consistent corporate vision and to define expectations; work to expand individual perspectives to co-opt ambitions, energies, and skills into the broader organizational agenda;<sup>6</sup> increase congruence with corporate values through training that reinforces desired attitudes and behaviors; evaluate personnel for work across functions; and help build relationships. (More and more, communities and networks of practice are empowered to accomplish the latter end.)

**“It's not enough that we win; everyone else must lose.”**

—Larry Ellison

### LIGHTS TO GO: FROM RED TO GREEN

Collaboration begins with individuals (although organizations can do much to foster it).<sup>7</sup> It is born of an intentional attitude that James Tamm and Ronald Luyet<sup>8</sup> have described as being in the Green Zone.<sup>9</sup> Green Zone environments are marled by high trust, dialogue, excitement, honesty, friendship, laughter, mutual support, sincerity, optimism, cooperation, friendly competition, shared vision, flexibility, risk taking, a tendency to learn from mistakes, the ability to face difficult truths, the taking of broad perspectives, openness to feedback, a sense of contribution, the

<sup>4</sup> Without specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound performance indicators, it will not be easy for managers to recognize problems and take necessary remedial actions. Arguably, there probably also is a need for a matrix guardian tasked, for instance, with monitoring and evaluation of matrix performance as well as identification of good practices for dissemination and uptake across an organization.

<sup>5</sup> Gone are the days when simple hierarchical structures could serve the needs of organizations. Complexity thinking must now help deal with complexity and personnel should be equipped for that. From this perspective, operating and managing in the matrix ceases to be a structural constraint to become a frame of mind.

<sup>6</sup> After all, it stands to reason that the interaction of a broad range of types of jobs—and people—is required to make the whole greater than the sum of its parts.

<sup>7</sup> Attitudes are impacted by biological and cultural factors, as well as personal history. But overcoming defensiveness to build successful relationships, both personal and professional, is still a choice that individuals make.

<sup>8</sup> James Tamm and Ronald Luyet. 2005. *Radical Collaboration: Five Essential Skills to Overcome Defensiveness and Build Successful Relationships*. HarperCollins Publishers.

<sup>9</sup> FIRO, the theory of fundamental interpersonal relations orientation, lies at the heart of the book. William Schutz (1925–2002), an American psychologist, is credited with its development. The theory explains human interaction by means of three primary dimensions: (i) inclusion, (ii) control, and (iii) affection. (The dimensions can be used to assess group dynamics.)

**Table 2: From Red Zone to Green Zone: Five Essential Skills**

Skill	Attribute
Collaborative Intention	Individuals stay in the Green Zone, maintain an authentic, nondefensive presence, and make a personal commitment to mutual success in their relationships.
Truthfulness	Individuals commit to both telling the truth and listening to the truth. They also create a climate of openness that allows people in the relationship to feel safe enough to discuss concerns, solve problems, and deal directly with difficult issues.
Self-Accountability	Individuals take responsibility for the circumstances of their lives. The choices they make either through action or failing to act, and the intended or unforeseen consequences of their actions. They would rather find a solution than find someone to blame.
Self-Awareness and Awareness of Others	Individuals commit to knowing themselves deeply and are willing to explore difficult interpersonal issues. They seek to understand the concerns, intentions, and motivations of others, as well as the culture and context of their circumstances.
Problem-Solving and Negotiating	Individuals use problem-solving methods that promote a cooperative atmosphere. They avoid fostering subtle or unconscious competition.

Source: James Tamm and Ronald Luyet. 2005. *Radical Collaboration: Five Essential Skills to Overcome Defensiveness and Build Successful Relationships*. HarperCollins Publishers.

experience of work as pleasure, internal motivation, and ethical behavior.<sup>10</sup>

The outer and inner selves of individuals in the Green Zone are congruent. They seek connection according to deeply held values and character, rather than tactical or strategic thinking. Therefore, they convey an authentic, nondefensive presence. Their actions in a relationship are not driven by fearful motives, nor are they determined by an unconscious competitive spirit. When conflict arises, they seek to understand and to grow because they desire mutual gains rather than victory. They can do so because they have tools, methods, and approaches to cope in less reactive ways.

The Green Zone is a catalyst for creativity and innovation and for high levels of problem solving. It allows individuals to focus their ambitions, energies, and skills. In an atmosphere that is free of intrigue, mistrust, and betrayal, they have greater opportunities to realize the potential of their circumstances. They dream, believe, dare, and do. Until individuals operate in the Green Zone, organizations will not be able to tap the excitement, aliveness, and productive power of collaborative relationships.

On the contrary, silos are Red Zone environments ruled by fear and defensiveness. (A parallel can be drawn to the notion of the passive-aggressive organization that Booz Allen Hamilton diagnose with inability to execute, ineffective decision making, information disconnect, and inconsistent or conflicting motivators.) Developing four introspective skills can help staff and management there cultivate mindsets and enhance organizational cultures to conduce and sustain high-performing, long-term collaborative relationships. The skills are (i) collaborative intention, (ii) truthfulness, (iii) self-accountability, and (iv) self-awareness and awareness of others.<sup>11</sup>

## FROM SILOS TO SYSTEMS

It follows that bridging organizational silos calls for collaboration, coordination, capability, and connection. This is easier said than done: practically, how can one aim at silo-driven problems? Usefully, Patrick Lencioni<sup>12</sup> has proposed a model for combating silos, against which actions to build collaboration, coordination, capability, and connection can be framed. His is, of course, reminiscent of the logic models used

<sup>10</sup> In opposition, Red Zone environments are marled by low trust, high blame, alienation, undertones of threats and fear, anxiety, guardedness, hyper rivalry, hostility, withholding, denial, hostile arguments, risk avoidance, cheating, greed, an attitude of entitlement, deadness, cynicism, suspicion, sarcasm, a tendency for people to hide mistakes, work experienced as painful, and dependence on external motivation. For individuals, the consequences of Red Zone behavior include loneliness, depression, anxiety, emptiness, self-centeredness, lack of intimacy, codependency, aggression, and the absence of enjoyment.

<sup>11</sup> Fortunately, modern organizations now also offer learning and development to promote emotional intelligence in the workplace. Importantly, many recognize too the need to identify and recruit personnel for collaborative intent. (The use of psychometric tests to that effect is growing.)

<sup>12</sup> Patrick Lencioni. 2006. *Silos, Politics and Turf Wars: A Leadership Fable About Destroying the Barriers That Turn Colleagues Into Competitors*. Jossey-Bass.

to design and monitor projects or programs; the breakthrough lies in the proposed application at the corporate level of a system to overcome the barriers that turn colleagues into competitors. The model comprises four components:

- **Establish a Thematic Goal.** A thematic goal is a single, qualitative, and time-bound focus that is shared by the entire organization irrespective of area of interest, expertise, gender, or title. It is a rallying cry for personnel to work together for the common good. It is not a long-term vision or a measurable objective.
- **Articulate Defining Objectives for the Thematic Goal.** The defining objectives provide actionable context so that personnel knows what must be done to accomplish the thematic goal. They too must be qualitative, time-bound, and shared.
- **Specify a Set of Ongoing Standard Operating Objectives.** The thematic goal and defining objectives only exist for a specified period of time. Standard operating objectives never change, no matter what the short-term focus is. They may include

**“We have met the enemy and he is us.”**

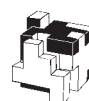
—Pogo

client satisfaction, productivity, market share, quality, etc. Of course, they must be consistent with the thematic goal.

- **Select Metrics.** Metrics are selected after the thematic goal has been established, the defining objectives for the goal have been articulated, and the standard operating objectives have been specified. They are necessary to manage and monitor the accomplishment of the thematic goal and defining objectives. Color schemes can be used to represent progress, e.g., Green = Made progress, Yellow = Progress beginning to stall or regress, and Red = Progress stalled or regressed. ■

## FURTHER READING

Patrick Lencioni. 2006. *Silos, Politics and Turf Wars: A Leadership Fable About Destroying the Barriers That Turn Colleagues Into Competitors*. Jossey-Bass.



### COLLABORATION MECHANISMS

When working with others, efforts sometimes turn out to be less than the sum of the parts. Too often, not enough attention is paid to facilitating effective collaborative practices.



# Building Communities of Practice

Communities of practice are groups of like-minded, interacting people who filter, amplify, invest and provide, convene, build, and learn and facilitate to ensure more effective creation and sharing of knowledge in their domain.



## WHAT ARE THEY?

According to Etienne Wenger, communities of practice are groups of people who share a passion for something they do and who interact regularly to learn how to do it better. Communities of practice define themselves along three dimensions: what they are about, how they function, and what capabilities they produce. Table 1 summarizes their principal attributes. Each community of practice has a unique domain, community, and practice (and the support it requires).<sup>1</sup> But, in connecting and collecting, communities of practice share the following common characteristics:

- They are peer-to-peer collaborative networks.
- They are driven by the willing participation of their members.
- They are focused on learning and building capacity.
- They are engaged in sharing knowledge, developing expertise, and solving problems.

## TOPICS, FOCAL AREAS, AND SAMPLE TECHNICAL FEATURES OF A HYPOTHETICAL COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE

Table 2 lists the topics for interaction of a hypothetical community of practice in monitoring and evaluation and the areas that it might focus on in each case. On each topic for interaction, the members of a community of practice would ask one another

- What challenges do you face?
- Are the challenges you face the same or different from mine?
- What resources do you have that can be shared?
- What ideas do you have about how to move ahead?
- How can we be mutually supportive?

Table 3 is the menu of combinations of some technical features that might support specific goals of that community.

**Table 1: Communities of Practice—What are They?**

What are Communities of Practice?	What Do Communities of Practice Do?	How Do Communities of Practice Operate?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Communities of practice share a domain</li><li>• They have a desire to share work-related knowledge</li><li>• They have a passion for learning</li><li>• They are self-selected and gain value from their membership</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Communities of practice provide a means to exchange data, information, and knowledge freely</li><li>• They break down communication barriers</li><li>• They provide an informal, welcoming social environment</li><li>• They provide a means for relationship-building and networking</li><li>• They populate and reference their knowledge network workspace</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Communities of practice are in continuous communication</li><li>• They hold annual and quarterly gatherings</li><li>• They arrange monthly teleconferences</li><li>• They have daily or weekly informal interaction</li><li>• They regularly access their communication platform</li></ul>

*continued on next page*

<sup>1</sup> The *domain* defines the area of shared inquiry. The *community* comprises the relationships among members and the sense of belonging. The *practice* is the body of knowledge, methods, stories, cases, tools, and documents. The goal of community design is to bring out the community's own internal direction, character, and energy.

Table 1 continued

What is the Value of Communities of Practice?	Community of Practice Success Factors
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Communities of practice identify, create, store, share, and use knowledge</li> <li>They decrease the learning curve of new employees</li> <li>They enable professional development</li> <li>They reduce rework and prevent reinvention of the wheel</li> <li>They permit faster problem solving and response time to needs and inquiries</li> <li>They illuminate good practice</li> <li>They spawn new ideas for products and services</li> <li>They enable accelerated learning</li> <li>They connect learning to action</li> <li>They make for organizational performance improvement</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Strategic relevance</b>—the strategic relevance of the domain, which lets the community find a legitimate place in the organization</li> <li><b>Domain</b>—directly related to real work</li> <li><b>Membership</b>—experts are involved</li> <li><b>Activities</b>—relevant to the members and the domain, with the right rhythm and mix</li> <li><b>Governance</b>—clear roles and expectations</li> <li><b>Facilitation</b>—a dedicated, passionate, skillful, and well-respected coordinator</li> <li><b>Culture</b>—a consistent attitude to sharing and collaboration</li> <li><b>Incentives</b>—a desire to participate</li> <li><b>Reward and recognition</b>—the organizational environment is adapted to support participation</li> <li><b>Information technology</b>—an appropriate medium of communication that adds value and helps deliver work programs</li> <li><b>Time</b>—members are given time and encouraged to participate</li> <li><b>Longevity</b>—needed both for communication and to build up trust, rapport, and a true sense of community</li> <li><b>Measurement</b>—how do we know a community of practice is successful?</li> </ul>

Source: Author.

Table 2: A Community of Practice in Monitoring and Evaluation—Topics and Focal Areas

	Formulating, Monitoring, and Evaluation Policy	Putting in Place a Monitoring and Evaluation Framework	Planning and Designing an Evaluation	Conducting an Evaluation	Using Evaluation Findings
Relationship Building					
Collaboration Mechanisms					
Knowledge Sharing and Learning					
Knowledge Capture and Storage					

Source: Author.

Table 3: A Community of Practice in Monitoring and Evaluation—Sample Technical Features

Relationship Building	Collaboration Mechanisms	Knowledge Sharing and Learning	Knowledge Capture and Storage
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Partnerships</li> <li>Member networking profiles</li> <li>Member directory with “relationship-focused” data fields</li> <li>Subgroups defined by administrators or that allow members to self-join</li> <li>Online meetings</li> <li>Online discussions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Action learning sets</li> <li>Project management</li> <li>Task management</li> <li>Document collaboration</li> <li>File version tracking</li> <li>Instant messaging</li> <li>Individual and group calendaring</li> <li>Web conferencing</li> <li>Online meetings</li> <li>Online discussions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Stories</li> <li>Peer assists</li> <li>After-action reviews and retrospects</li> <li>Structured databases</li> <li>Idea banks</li> <li>Visiting speakers</li> <li>Expert database and search tools</li> <li>Announcements</li> <li>Web conferencing</li> <li>Online meetings</li> <li>Online discussions</li> <li>Website links</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Exit interviews</li> <li>Member profiles</li> <li>How-to guides</li> <li>Slideshows</li> <li>E-learning tools</li> <li>Visiting speakers</li> <li>Assessments</li> <li>Web logs</li> <li>Web conferencing</li> <li>Online meetings</li> <li>Online discussions</li> <li>Website links</li> </ul>

Source: Author.

## DESIGN AND MANAGEMENT

To continuously design and manage a community of practice, members typically follow the 5D model depicted in the figure below.<sup>2</sup> It involves

- Discovering**—exploring relationships to the community through individual narratives.

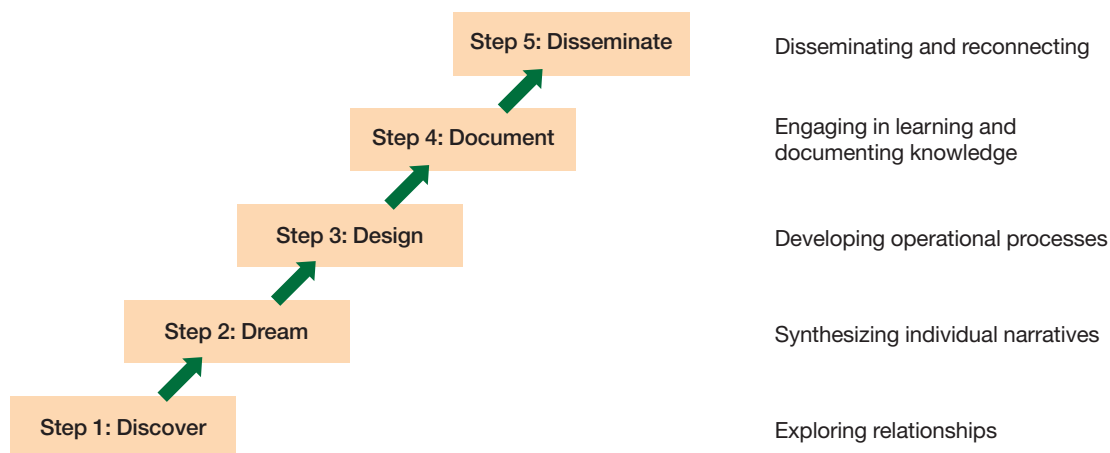
- Dreaming**—synthesizing individual narratives into a community story centered on joint purpose and mutual engagement.
- Designing**—developing operational processes for the community.

<sup>2</sup> See Jean Lave and Etienne Wenger. 1991. *Situated Learning: Legitimate Peripheral Participation*. Cambridge University Press.





**Figure: 5D Model for Designing and Managing Sustainable Communities of Practice**



Source: Author.

- **Documenting**—engaging in learning and documenting knowledge.
- **Disseminating**—disseminating and reconnecting the community's learning.

## BUILDING A COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE

The members of a community of practice will need to plan and ask themselves key questions on *strategy*

- What change(s) in the work we do will take place in the next 3–6 months because of the community of practice?
- Why is the community the best way of bringing about this change?
- What is the one thing that I need to do next week to facilitate the community?

Sample *domain-related* questions will include

- What specific topics do we want to address in the community of practice in the next 3–6 months?
- Why are these topics relevant to our organization?
- What kind of influence do we want to have on our organization?
- Who will assume leadership in promoting our domain?

Sample *community-related* questions will include

- Who will be the members of the community of practice in the next 3–6 months?
- How can ownership and management of the community be fostered?

- How often will the community meet?<sup>3</sup> How will the members connect?
- How can the community balance the needs of various members?
- How will members deal with conflict?
- How will new members be introduced into the community?

Sample *practice-related* questions will include

- How should we identify, create, store, share, and use knowledge?
- How should we evaluate the effectiveness of our community of practice in the next 3–6 months?
- How should we ensure ongoing connection between the members?
- How should we deal with conflicts between our own work and community work?

A sample *support-related* question will be

- What support do we need to be successful in achieving changes to our work through the community of practice?

## COMMUNICATION PLATFORMS<sup>4</sup>

An appropriate medium of communication is critical to the success of communities of practice.<sup>5</sup> It should be monitored continuously. The box below suggests what its main attributes might be. Specifically, the communication platform would

- Serve as an ongoing learning venue for practitioners who share similar goals, interests, and concerns.

<sup>3</sup> The initial members could plan an inaugural physical meeting, to be followed by annual meetings. Physical meetings for a virtual platform seem counter-intuitive but the experience of many communities of practice shows that to be a key success factor.

<sup>4</sup> Before the advent of the internet, the operations of communities of practice were defined by face-to-face meetings in specific locales. Today, they can span a variety of contexts and geographies. With Web 2.0, technology will continue to change what it means to be part of a community. The cost of entry is lower than ever and practitioners often straddle two or three online communities. Yet, to draw value, they must contribute value. From now on, communities of practice will have to pay more attention to harnessing the commitment and energy of members.

<sup>5</sup> Needless to say, the medium of communication must have connectivity. Members should not experience technical difficulties. Queries should be addressed by a secretariat. The communication platform should also provide a simple user manual and other help tools.



- Help connect members to the right people and provide a platform for rapid responses to individual inquiries from members.
- Provide news of community activities and events to members.
- Develop, capture, and transfer good practices on specific topics by stimulating active sharing of knowledge.
- Promote partnership arrangements with interested knowledge hubs and other networks.
- Influence development outcomes by promoting greater and better-informed dialogue.
- Promote innovative approaches to address specific challenges. ■

## Box: Communication Platforms for Communities of Practice—Architecture

### Contents

- Home page: relevant information and news, latest news on the progress of related activities and projects, ongoing activities and online discussions
- About the community: background information, expected outcomes and impact
- News and announcements: news archives, email newsletter archives
- Library (repository of relevant documents and tools)
- Discussions (online discussions on particular topics of interest)
- Members: list of members with background information and email addresses
- Photo gallery
- Links to other websites
- Help (information on how to use the site and how to get assistance)
- Contact us

### Tools

- Search facility
- Email this page/notify members of this page
- Download and print this page
- Optional: online chat facility, an events calendar

### Look-and-Feel

- Lively and dynamic
- Friendly and accessible
- Professional and credible

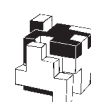
### Tagline

- A memorable phrase to brand the communication platform and strengthen awareness of it

### Optional Orientations

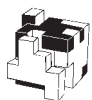
- Rooms for working groups, face-to-face events, or special-interest topics
- Business opportunities and advertisements
- Podcasts/webcasts
- Web logs
- Wikis
- Enhanced member profiles including an individual member's website bookmarks and web log

Source: Author.



### COLLABORATION MECHANISMS

When working with others, efforts sometimes turn out to be less than the sum of the parts. Too often, not enough attention is paid to facilitating effective collaborative practices.



# Building Trust in the Workplace

Workplace dynamics make a significant difference to people and the organizations they sustain. High-performance organizations earn, develop, and retain trust for superior results.



## INTRODUCTION

Dictionary.com's first definition of trust is "reliance on the integrity, strength, ability, surety, etc., of a person or thing; confidence." The website prompts also that it is "the obligation or responsibility imposed on a person in whom confidence or authority is placed: *a position of trust*." Both definitions imply that trust is a relationship of reliance:<sup>1</sup> indeed, a relationship without trust is no relationship at all.

Trust is, therefore, both an emotional<sup>2</sup> and a rational<sup>3</sup> (cognitive, calculative, and rational) act. The emotions associated with it include affection, gratitude, security, confidence, acceptance, interest, admiration, respect, liking, appreciation, contentment, and satisfaction, all of them necessary ingredients of psychological health. The logic of it is grounded in assessments of a party's dependability, which play a significant role in decisions to trust. As expected, there are different intensities to trust, depending on why one grants trust and why it is accepted:<sup>4</sup> knowing the different types of trust informs decision making at each level.<sup>5</sup>

Strangely, however, despite instinctive recognition of the importance of trust in human affairs, its conceptualization in

the workplace remains limited in literature—but grew in the 1990s, while actions to foster it in that environment are still not readily discernible in practice.

## BENEFITS

In organizations, business processes<sup>6</sup>—be they management, operational, or supporting processes—are conducted via relationships. Since trust among interacting parties is the foundation of effective relationships, it stands to reason that organizations can reap benefits from strengthening it. As a matter of fact, high-trust environments correlate positively with high degrees of personnel involvement, commitment, and organizational success. Decided advantages include increased value; accelerated growth; market and societal trust; reputation and recognizable brands; effortless communication; enhanced innovation; positive, transparent relationships with personnel and other stakeholders; improved collaboration and partnering; fully aligned systems and structures; heightened loyalty; powerful contributions of discretionary energy; strong innovation, engagement, confidence, and loyalty; better execution; increased adaptability; and robust retention and replenishment of

<sup>1</sup> To be exact, trust is a prediction of reliance, derived from what a party knows about another.

<sup>2</sup> The act of trusting exposes one's vulnerabilities to others in the belief that they will not take advantage of these.

<sup>3</sup> The act of trusting involves assessing probabilities of profit and loss, calculating expected utility based on (past, current, and expected) performance, and concluding that the party in question will behave in a predictable manner.

<sup>4</sup> Roderick Kramer has identified six kinds of trust. *Dispositional trust* refers to an individual's predisposition to trust; it is based on experiences with relationships and the outlook on human nature that then guides decisions. *History-based trust* relies on the build up of interactions over time; expectations that are met increase trust while those that are unmet decrease it. *Third-party dependent trust* is a secondhand trust determinant; a large component of it is gossip, which means that trust is bolstered for some people and degraded for others depending on the subjective view of the gossiper. *Category-based trust* is anchored in membership of a group or organization; problems arise from blindly trusting members that one does not really know and excluding outsiders whom it may be more beneficial to trust. *Role-based trust* is founded on knowing that the person assigned to a job can fulfill its requirements; it owes more to reliance on the business processes that underpin the job than to trust in the person who performs it. *Rule-based trust* establishes a sense of normalcy in organization and elicits trust-binding force; it persuades us to take for granted that people will follow directives and behave in consistent, procedural ways. Other typologies of trust categorize deterrence-, calculus-, knowledge-, and identification-based trust.

<sup>5</sup> Future research might investigate the ways in which types of trust—including their emotional and rational elements—combine and evolve. There is fertile ground too in examining the impact of cultural contexts on trust. From there, one might conceive of trust as a single (but nevertheless still complex) function, with the amount of trust given or received varying as the result of a combination of (i) characteristic similarity, (ii) experiences of reciprocity, and (iii) embedded predisposition to trust (generated by broad societal norms and expectations).

<sup>6</sup> A business process is a collection of related, structured activities or tasks that produce a specific service or product for a particular client.

knowledge workers. Nothing is as relevant as the ubiquitous impact of high trust.<sup>7</sup>

## TRUST AS A KEY LEADERSHIP COMPETENCY

In organizations, managers are initiators of trust and must play a central role in determining both its overall level and specific expectations within individual work units.<sup>8</sup> Their ability to establish, grow, extend, and restore trust is a key managerial competency. Some say that extending trust is the first job of any manager, to be conducted in ways that release the talent, creativity, capacity, and contribution of individuals and teams and enable them to give their best in synergy with others. The responsibilities of managers, in support of which they must harness vivid and compelling communications, cover at least five areas:

- **Vision.** An organization's vision (and associated mission and strategic direction) is a statement of ambitious and compelling strategic intent that provides the emotional and rational energy for an organization's journey. If staff are to trust the organization, the vision must be clear and represent an attainable stretch that emphasizes the importance of contributions in achieving it. It cannot be a statement that is devoid of action. The role of managers is to help individuals and teams translate the organization's vision into their own personal vision.
- **Values.** Values are beliefs or convictions that guide behavior to achieve the organization's vision.<sup>9</sup> They help define or describe the desired culture. They also convey what is important to the organization as well as what key practices and behaviors will be recognized and rewarded (or sanctioned). Trust pervades when—and only when—managers follow and support the organization's values; by publicizing and modeling these, they provide a benchmark for all staff.

**“The leaders who work most effectively, it seems to me, never say ‘I.’ And that’s not because they have trained themselves not to say ‘I.’ They don’t think ‘I.’ They think ‘we’; they think ‘team.’ They understand their job to be to make the team function. They accept responsibility and don’t sidestep it, but ‘we’ gets the credit. This is what creates trust, what enables you to get the task done.”**

—Peter Drucker

- **Work Environment.** The environment in which individuals and teams work contributes significantly to their perceptions of management and the extent they believe it

cares about their welfare. Conditions that betray a lack of interest will create feelings of distrust. More important than physical amenities, however, is the atmosphere that exists in an organization: a negative atmosphere sows discontent throughout—personnel should be able to trust that management works to create an enabling environment.

**“Set your expectations high; find men and women whose integrity and values you respect; get their agreement on a course of action; and give them your ultimate trust.”**

—John Akers

- **Personnel.** Some of the more difficult decisions that managers make relate to hiring, firing, appraising, promoting, and transferring staff. If an organization is to build trust, such decisions must be based on factual, objective data. Personnel will scrutinize promotion decisions to determine whether management cares about performance and values. Poor decisions erode trust in management and leads staff to question why they work so hard to meet performance expectations if— it appears—performance does not really matter.
- **Compensation.** Few issues create as much argument and suspicion as compensation (and other benefits). For an organization's compensation system to be perceived as fair rather than manipulative, managers need to follow a consistent and honest approach by sharing salary ranges; reaching merit pay decisions based on actual performance; quantifying bonus, severance, and related systems transparently; conducting internal equity comparisons for same or similar jobs; and carrying out external market equity comparisons for critical jobs.

**“I’m not upset that you lied to me, I’m upset that from now on I can’t believe you.”**

—Friedrich Nietzsche

## ENHANCING PERSONAL CREDIBILITY

Notwithstanding the responsibilities of management, earning, developing, and retaining trust in the workplace is an obligation for each member of the organization. The key principle undergirding ability to set and accomplish objectives, keep commitments, and “walk the talk” is credibility, which intimates to others that one is trustworthy. Credibility is made up of four attributes of character and competence:<sup>10</sup>

<sup>7</sup> Conversely, the costs of mistrust include toxic cultures (office politics); dysfunctional working environments; redundant hierarchies (excessive layers of management, overlapping structures); punishing systems (complex and cumbersome policies, rules, regulations, procedures, and processes); poor company loyalty; decreased commitment; disengagement; low productivity; intense micromanagement; militant stakeholders; high employee turnover; and fraud.

<sup>8</sup> Depending on the nature of their role relative to trust, they do so through the organizational form employed, vertical exchanges, the design and application of reward and control systems, and the flow of information, among others.

<sup>9</sup> Typical corporate values emphasize innovation, excellence, service, integrity, respect, bias for action, or teamwork, often in the form of small statements.

<sup>10</sup> Because credibility is the sum of integrity, intent, capabilities, and results, it is possible to score high in some of these foundational elements but low in others.



- **Integrity.** According to Dictionary.com, integrity is “adherence to moral and ethical principles; soundness of moral character; honesty.” Men and women who are imbued with integrity stand for something, make and keep commitments to themselves, and remain open. Time and again, this may require courage.
- **Intent.** Intent refers to motives, agendas, and resulting behaviors. Trust grows when all three are candid and based on mutual interest.
- **Capabilities.** Capabilities are the talents, attitudes, skills, knowledge, and styles we leverage to deliver results. Capable people know where they are going, run with their strengths (and compensate for weaknesses), and keep themselves relevant.

**“There are seven social sins: politics without principles; wealth without work; pleasure without conscience; knowledge without character; commerce without morality; science without humanity; worship without sacrifice.”**

—Mohandas K. Gandhi

- **Results.** Results crown credibility to offer visible, tangible, and measurable contributions that can be evaluated by others. Results are delivered by performers who expect to win, take responsibility for results, and finish strong. ■

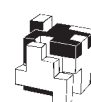
**Table: Committing to Build Organizational Trust**

	Behavior	Current Performance	Opposite/Counterfeit
Character	Talk Straight	<input type="text"/>	Lie, spin, tell half-truths, double-talk, flatter.
	Demonstrate Respect	<input type="text"/>	Don't care or don't show you care; show disrespect or show respect only to those who can do something for you.
	Create Transparency	<input type="text"/>	Withhold information; keep secrets; create illusions; pretend.
	Right Wrongs	<input type="text"/>	Don't admit or repair mistakes; cover up mistakes.
	Show Loyalty	<input type="text"/>	Sell others out; take the credit yourself; sweet-talk people to their faces and bad-mouth them behind their backs.
Competence	Deliver Results	<input type="text"/>	Fail to deliver; deliver on activities, not results.
	Get Better	<input type="text"/>	Deteriorate; don't invest in improvement; force every problem into your one solution.
	Confront Reality	<input type="text"/>	Bury your head in the sand; focus on busywork while skirting the real issues.
	Clarify Expectations	<input type="text"/>	Assume expectations or don't disclose them; create vague and shifting expectations.
	Practice Accountability	<input type="text"/>	Don't take responsibility: “It's not my fault!”; don't hold others accountable.
Both	Listen First	<input type="text"/>	Don't listen; speak first, listen last; pretend to listen; listen without understanding.
	Keep Commitments	<input type="text"/>	Break commitments; violate promises; make vague and elusive commitments or don't make any commitments.
	Extend Trust	<input type="text"/>	Withhold trust; fake trust and then snoopervise; give responsibility without authority.

Source: Stephen Covey. 2006. *The Speed of Trust: The One Thing that Changes Everything*. Free Press.

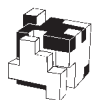
## FURTHER READING

- Stephen Covey. 2006. *The Speed of Trust: The One Thing that Changes Everything*. Free Press.
- Roderick Kramer. 1999. *Trust and Distrust in Organizations: Emerging Perspectives, Enduring Questions*. *Annual Review of Psychology*. 50. pp. 569–598.



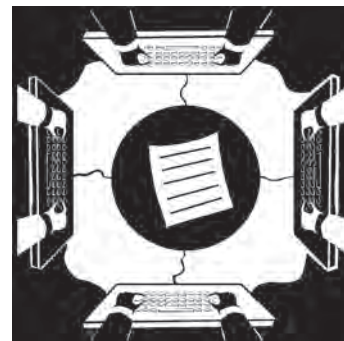
## COLLABORATION MECHANISMS

When working with others, efforts sometimes turn out to be less than the sum of the parts. Too often, not enough attention is paid to facilitating effective collaborative practices.



# Collaborating with Wikis\*

Wikis are websites that invite voluntary contributions to organize information. They harness the power of collaborative minds to innovate faster, cocreate, and cut costs. They are now serious business.



## BACKGROUND

As the internet revolution presses on, computer-mediated communications through social (conversational) technologies<sup>1</sup> also seem to advance every day.<sup>2</sup> (Social sites, such as MySpace and Facebook; commercial sites, such as Amazon.com and eBay; and media sites, such as Flickr and YouTube, to name a few applications, have become very popular.) Given the fast-rising number of these technologies, the confused might recall that people form online communities by combining one-to-one, one-to-many, and many-to-many communication modes. The commonality is that all tap the power of new information and communication technologies and the resultant interconnectivity to facilitate engagement, collaboration, and sharing of tacit knowledge. Wikis<sup>3</sup> are one such form of social technology, designed to enable anyone with access to contribute or modify content using a simplified markup language. They are used to create and power collaborative websites. Some believe that such open, peering, sharing, and global tools ring the death knell of old-school, inwardly focused, self-contained corporations.<sup>4</sup>

## DEFINITION

A wiki is a website—for corporate or personal use—that facilitates interactive,<sup>5</sup> self-referencing, and open-ended collection of definitions, descriptions, and references, viz. articles placed in topics and subtopics, using a simplified markup language. Wikis first appeared in response to the difficulty of using weblogs<sup>6</sup> (blogs) in a collaborative context. They have evolved into an increasingly popular tool for sharing all kinds of information in a browser-independent format, and a growing number of companies offer free and subscription-based applications as well as online storage for wikis.<sup>7</sup>

## USES

The potential of wikis as open knowledge exchange systems is perhaps best illustrated by the rise of Wikipedia<sup>8</sup> since 2001. Naturally, since contributions are voluntary, the uses of a wiki are limited only by the creativity of the people who access it. Potential uses include

- primary, secondary, and tertiary education;
- corporate knowledge repositories;

\* Norman Lu contributed to these *Knowledge Solutions*.

<sup>1</sup> Many older media, such as mailing lists and Usenet forums, qualify as “social.” These days, however, the term “social technologies” is used to describe Web 2.0 tools that are based on the internet. Typically, they include authoring, extension, link, search, signal, and tag features. (Other equally important tools do not require a web platform, such as mobile telephone communications, radio services, and real-life, face-to-face socializing methods.)

<sup>2</sup> There is little wonder in this as the internet was conceived as a participative, social technology.

<sup>3</sup> “Wiki” is the abbreviation of WikiWikiWeb, the name that Ward Cunningham gave in 1995 to a code he programmed to facilitate development of collaborative websites, the content of which could be edited by anyone with access to the sites. Wikiwiki means “fast, speedy” in Hawaiian.

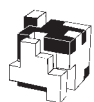
<sup>4</sup> According to Don Tapscott and Anthony Williams, this is because (for businesses) they (i) harness external talent, (ii) keep up with users, (iii) boost demand for complementary offerings, (iv) reduce costs, (v) shift the locus of competition, (vi) take the friction out of collaboration, and (vii) develop social capital. To reap these benefits, the “wikinomics” design principles are (i) take cues from your lead users, (ii) build critical mass, (iii) supply an infrastructure for collaboration, (iv) take time to get the structure and governance right, (v) abide by community norms, (vi) let the process evolve, and (vii) hone your collaborative mind.

<sup>5</sup> Since any user has the right to create, edit, and delete content, system abuses are avoided by a revision control system that tracks changes and enables the administrator to revert to previous versions.

<sup>6</sup> Wikis and blogs are websites but the two differ in the publishing processes they follow. Blogs are typically published by a single author, who may have a certain point of view.

<sup>7</sup> The principal advantage of relying on vendors is the low cost for start up: by leveraging a vendor’s infrastructure, capital investment is minimized. Also, this hosted model eliminates the need to manage software versions as well as their upgrades and technical environments. The disadvantages of the hosted model are that it requires trust with the vendor, establishes a degree of lock-in to the service, and precludes any modification that an organization might like to effect to the original configuration of the application.

<sup>8</sup> Wikipedia is a multilingual project to create a complete and accurate open-content encyclopedia. Available: [www.wikipedia.org/](http://www.wikipedia.org/)



- organizational directories;
- network resource databases;
- operations manuals;
- standard operating procedures;
- technical support manuals;
- guides to reordering parts and services;
- user's guides;
- cross-project overviews;
- collaborative workspaces;
- invoice tracking systems;
- logs of client work;
- lists of references;
- lists of contacts;
- to-do lists; and
- frequently asked questions (FAQs).

## FEATURES

The main features of wiki software are

- **Authentication and account management.** Wiki administrators assign access privileges and determine an individual's role as reader (permitted to view documents and download content), editor (allowed to update existing content), or author (able to create new content, delete, and reorganize existing content).
- **Content management.** Wikis provide authorized users with a simple web interface to add, edit, and save content in the system. Many popular content management systems employ WYSIWYG (what you see is what you get) interfaces that resemble those of a word processor. This permits authorized users to adjust elements, such as font size, style (bold, underscore, italics), and other textual elements. Wikis also accept multimedia elements, such as images and online videos.
- **Revision (change) history.** Each change to a wiki document is logged by the system. This function is important for two reasons: it establishes a record of revisions for accountability purposes and it permits administrators to roll back ("undo") changes to an earlier version of the document. Wikis generally allow readers to compare page versions based on the revision history.
- **Cross-platform compatibility.** Wikis rely on standard web-authoring languages to display output.<sup>9</sup> No special brand-specific software is required to read or edit a wiki, other than a standard web browser.
- **Others.** Wikipedia, the world's most popular community-edited wiki, introduced a feature called "Criticism." While

anyone can edit a particular entry on Wikipedia, authorized users may publish opinions about a particular update on a document.

## CHALLENGES

The principal impediments to wiki usage relate to integration and motivation:

- **Integration.** Most organizations operate with bundled, standardized office suites such as Microsoft Office or StarOffice. These suites typically offer powerful and integrated word processing, spreadsheet, database, drawing, and presentation capabilities, and allow authorized users to copy and paste content across these. However, it is not easy for wikis to embed diagrams that users can continue to modify, such as flowcharts, while wiki tables are not as flexible or robust as Microsoft Office or StarOffice tables. Also, office applications allow faster copying and pasting of images, a process that in a wiki usually requires two steps (uploading the file and linking to it).
- **Motivation.** The most active wikis will be those that motivate their community to create and update content. Clearly, incentive programs and positive feedback in performance reviews have a role to play. Making wiki contribution part of standard deliverables will also improve its adoption rate.

### Box: A Common Scenario No More

In many organizations, exchanging electronic mail among multiple recipients has replaced the shuffling of paper documents. But electronic mail is quite inefficient if it is used to circulate documents for commenting or revision. An author may send a single document to, say, three peers, thereby creating three distinct copies of it. They may, in turn, respond by correcting their copy, blissfully unaware of one another's comments or revisions. The author is then given three new copies of the same document, and burdened with the Sisyphean task of synchronizing the versions.

Wikis address the circulation problems caused by electronic mail by keeping one document, but preserving various states of its evolution by recording the changes made by authors and editors. Hence, what starts as one document ends as one document. Also, by recording the history of changes, editors and authors remain focused on the same copy.

Source: Author.

<sup>9</sup> That is, HyperText Markup Language (HTML), the predominant markup language for web pages. It provides a means to describe the structure of text-based information in a document by denoting certain text as links, headings, paragraphs, lists, etc., and to supplement that text with interactive forms, embedded images, and other objects.



## CAVEAT

Trust and credibility are a challenge for public wikis because these are very much shaped by the abilities of their authors. Sites, such as Wikipedia, have been criticized on quality and accuracy (even if founder Jimmy Wales thinks that his product measures up to the Encyclopedia Britannica). Be this as it may, Wikipedia now delivers free knowledge products from purely

voluntary contributions while the content of the Encyclopedia Britannica depends on paid subscriptions: the collaborative advantage of this most famous public wiki demands respect. ■

## FURTHER READING

Don Tapscott and Anthony Williams. 2006. *Wikinomics: How Mass Collaboration Changes Everything*. Atlantic Books.



### COLLABORATION MECHANISMS

When working with others, efforts sometimes turn out to be less than the sum of the parts. Too often, not enough attention is paid to facilitating effective collaborative practices.





# Distributing Leadership

The prevailing view of leadership is that it is concentrated or focused. In organizations, this makes it an input to business processes and performance—dependent on the attributes, behaviors, experience, knowledge, skills, and potential of the individuals chosen to impact these. The theory of distributed leadership thinks it best considered as an outcome. Leadership is defined by what one does, not who one is. Leadership at all levels matters and must be drawn from, not just be added to, individuals and groups in organizations.



## FOSSIL FUEL

Modern humans (*Homo sapiens*) evolved in East Africa some 200,000 years ago. They lived in tightly knit nomadic groups of 10–30 individuals, perhaps as large as 30–50. (Seasonally, they may have assembled in social collectives of 100 or more when resources were abundant.) To subsist, they foraged edible plants and sometimes caught wild animals—without much recourse to the domestication of either—in adaptive strategies.

These band societies had nonhierarchical and egalitarian<sup>1</sup> social structures: individuals had no authority over one another and, barring gender, distinctions based on power, prestige, wealth, or rank did not exist. Individuals came forward when their expertise was needed. Elders were looked to for advice but decisions were consensual. There were no written laws and none of the specialized coercive roles played in more complex societies; customs were transmitted orally.

Some nomadic groups began the transition to sedentary life in built-up villages and towns, then in early chiefdoms and embryonic states, about 6,000 years ago—most likely following the appearance of agriculture (and domestication of animals) some 4,000 years before that.<sup>2</sup> Once begun, the process of agriculture-driven social, economic, and technological expansion led to more densely populated and stratified societies and, eventually, the development of Byzantine governments.

However, only in the last 100–500 years have there been state-level polities.

## FAST FORWARD

The Neolithic Revolution was, in effect, the first agricultural revolution and the mother of all changes.<sup>3</sup> Other agricultural revolutions followed the early move from hunter-gatherer to agrarian societies, including the Muslim Agricultural Revolution that unfurled from the 8th to the 13th century, later manifestations in 17th and 18th century Europe, and the Green Revolution of the mid-20th century. In the 18th and 19th centuries, an Industrial Revolution in the United Kingdom sparked major transformations in agriculture, manufacturing, mining, and transport, and sped advances in natural, social, and interdisciplinary sciences, e.g., astronomy, biology, chemistry, human anatomy, mathematics, and physics, that had come to light from the 16th century. Later tectonic shifts in human progress included the Commercial Revolution—a period of European economic expansion, colonialism, and mercantilism that lasted from the 16th century until the early 18th century; and the Digital Revolution—brought about by sweeping changes in computing and communication technology from the 1980s. In all instances, creativity and innovation were born of opportunity and necessity that gradually, then ever

<sup>1</sup> The mobility of families on the move demanded that material possessions be minimized. For that reason, single members could not accumulate surpluses of resources.

<sup>2</sup> When the last glacial period ended about 10,000 years ago, much of the earth became subject to drier spells. The new climate favored the emergence of annual plants that die in the dry season, leaving a dormant seed or tuber. It is the availability of readily storable wild grains—especially cereals—and pulses that may have enabled some hunter-gatherers to settle in villages. Evidence points to the Fertile Crescent of the Middle East, viz., the Levant and Mesopotamia, as the site of the earliest planned sowing and harvesting of plants. Development of agriculture also seems to have occurred in northern and southern China (as early as 10,000–11,000 years ago, findings now suggest), the Sahel Belt, the island of New Guinea, and regions of the Americas.

<sup>3</sup> The sedentary societies that the Neolithic Revolution engendered modified their natural environment with specialized cultivation and storage technologies that made surplus production possible. This laid the basis for high population densities; centralized administrations and political structures; hierarchical ideologies; labor diversification; trading economies; the advancement of nonportable art, architecture, and culture; and depersonalized systems of knowledge.

more rapidly, transfigured the planet. Their offspring is the phenomenon of globalization.

## ORGANIZATION, ACTIVITY, AND KNOWLEDGE

Individuals group when the perceived benefits from collaboration outstrip those from going it alone.<sup>4</sup> The reverse is that groups act in ways that benefit the group before the individual. Since the Neolithic Period, humans have organized to face a fast-changing environment. Even so, their multifaceted ways have been nothing more (and certainly nothing less) than endeavors to harness and balance innate (self-centered and other-centered) human drives<sup>5</sup> in contexts of scarce resources. From the mid-1990s, to cite an example, the multiplication of communities and networks of practice (not to forget virtual teams)—driven by computing and communication technology, as well as globalization—has propagated radically new forms of organization and stimulated thinking about working in groups.<sup>6</sup>

**“The strongest human instinct is to impart information, the second strongest is to resist it.”**

—Kenneth Grahame

Clearly, learning is in the relationships between people in their environment and the links between organization, activity, and knowledge are intimate. The more successful approaches to organizational structuring have been anthropologically sensitive and recognized that human beings are biological entities that cannot, and therefore should not, be overly controlled. Since knowledge work now demands that we organize better for change, interest has grown in a long-forgotten *modus operandi*

that harks back to the Neolithic Period: it is that of self-organizing teams.

## ORGANIZING FOR CHANGE

In a globalizing world, innovation is more than ever associated with organizational survival. For innovation to thrive, people need to be immersed in flexible social environments, not chained in cause-and-effect constructs. (When it comes to knowledge workers, traditional concepts of management seldom work: knowledge workers carry their means of production—meaning their intelligence—with them.) In self-organizing teams, members eschew reliance on traditional, positional leadership<sup>7</sup> to spontaneously take the lead. If, as evidence shows, most organizations have reached a point in their evolution when they no longer need leaders in front and followers at the back, efforts and money<sup>8</sup> would be better spent on fortifying leadership as a mutual, social phenomenon.

## THE ORPHEUS CHAMBER ORCHESTRA

The Orpheus Chamber Orchestra<sup>9</sup> was founded in 1972 by cellist Julian Fifer and fellow musicians to bring chamber music's ideals of democracy, personal involvement, and mutual respect into an orchestral setting. It has no conductor.<sup>10</sup> However, being conductorless does not mean that it is leaderless—far from it: the orchestra has developed a system of musical chairs that invites each of the 27 permanent members to assume leadership positions, either by leading the group in rehearsal and performance as concertmaster or by heading one of the orchestra's many different formal or informal teams.

Built on eight supporting principles, the Orpheus process has reportedly unleashed the vision, talent, creativity, innovation,

<sup>4</sup> People join groups for many reasons. A primary motive is that membership often satisfies basic needs. First, activities that enhance survival, such as hunting and defense against predators, are usually best accomplished collectively rather than on one's own. Second, man has a biological need for social contact. Third, group membership often fills the need for power (which relates to the capacity or potential to influence the behavior of others). Besides gratifying needs, membership can also give a person more opportunity to accomplish goals. A last reason, perhaps related to the third need mentioned earlier, is that being close to others can provide comfort and support. To repeat, individuals do not join groups randomly: they do so for instrumental reasons. Their membership may also serve several purposes simultaneously, while they may belong to several groups at the same time.

<sup>5</sup> See Charles Ehni. 2000. *Unleashing Intellectual Capital*. Butterworth-Heinemann. The self-centered drives that Charles Ehni distinguishes are rank, status, discipline, control, territory, possessions, fear, anger, and sex. The other-centered drives are attachment, affiliation, care giving, care receiving, altruism, remorse, shame, and guilt.

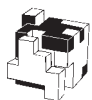
<sup>6</sup> The potency of communities and networks of practice, and reason members join them, is that they offer a way to theorize tacit knowledge. By so doing, they decrease the learning curve of new employees, enable professional development, reduce rework and prevent reinvention of the wheel, permit faster problem resolution and response time to needs and inquiries, illuminate good practice, spawn new ideas for products and services, enable accelerated learning, connect learning to action, and make for organizational performance improvement.

<sup>7</sup> The presumption that underpins the near-universal practice of positional leadership is that certain people are eligible or can be groomed for leadership. Indeed, most positions are by appointment. The practice is rooted in the great man model of leadership and more recent, related theories concerned with the traits, behaviors, or styles of successful leaders; the contextual nature of leadership and the role of followers; and the interactions of traits, behaviors, and situations (as well as group facilitation) that empower leaders to transact or transform for excellence. In the 21st century, such conceptions of leadership seem more and more outdated.

<sup>8</sup> Executive training is about transfusing leadership into a chosen few, so that they might be transformed and then change their organization. But, even though the anointed may learn, no one else in their organization is likely to by virtue of their nonselection: sending a changed person in an unchanged environment is not necessarily effective.

<sup>9</sup> See [www.orpheusnyc.com/](http://www.orpheusnyc.com/)

<sup>10</sup> In traditional orchestras, conductors wield unquestioned authority over those who perform under their baton. They select the repertoire, organize rehearsals, and instruct the musicians how to play. In a survey of symphony orchestra musicians and workers in other professions in East Germany, West Germany, the United Kingdom, and the United States, conducted in the late 1980s and early 1990s, orchestra musicians scored the highest in terms of having personal, self-directed internal motivation. However, they ranked seventh out of 13 occupations in terms of job satisfaction, below prison guards and just above industrial production teams. When asked if their job provided for personal growth and development, responses were even more distressing: they ranked ninth. (The occupations surveyed were airline cockpit crews, airline flight attendants, amateur theater companies, beer sales and delivery teams, economic analysts in the government, industrial production teams, mental health treatment teams, operating room nurses, prison guards, professional hockey team, professional string quartets, semiconductor fabrication teams, and symphony orchestra musicians.) See Jutta Allmendinger, Richard Hackman, and Erin Lehman. 1996. Life and Work in Symphony Orchestras. *Musical Quarterly*. 80. pp. 194–219.



energy, and leadership potential of each member. (The free-spirited energy of its keenly attentive musicians results in an edgy spontaneity, and proves that size is less important than vigor.)<sup>11</sup> Apparently, the orchestra is also uncommonly responsive to changing conditions in the listening public or in its membership. Finally, although they play in other groups too, the permanent members consider playing in the orchestra their most fulfilling musical experience. According to Eric Bartlett, one of its cellists, “Orpheus has removed a barrier between the audience and the music, the conductor himself.”

## REDISCOVERING DISTRIBUTED LEADERSHIP

The widely distributed, interconnected, and virtual forms of organization that have emerged require that organizations unlock the knowledge of their members and empower them to act on their own behalf and on behalf of their organizations.

Positional leadership does not meet the needs of high-performance organizations: when working with knowledge workers, managers can have no direct authority over how their “subordinates” perform; they can at best coax them to do their best.<sup>12</sup> They will deliver more by not clutching the reins and, instead, entice others to hold them as the situation warrants.

**“Grant is the first general I have had. You know how it has been with all the rest. They wanted me to be the general. I am glad to find a man who can go ahead without me.”**

—Abraham Lincoln

The literature on distributed leadership is young and modest. It rests on a handful of articles written in the 1990s and 2000s, mainly in the field of educational leadership.<sup>13</sup> (Sometimes, interchangeable notions of collaborative, delegated, democratic, dispersed, shared, teacher, and thought leadership<sup>14</sup> in these do not make for clarity.) Nonetheless, it constitutes a clear-cut break from the leadership theories that, from the 1980s, examined what combinations of traits, behaviors, and situations (as well as group facilitation) might allow individuals to transact or transform for excellence.<sup>15</sup> Quite simply, it is a different way of thinking about leadership, a new lens through which to view and study leadership as a phenomenon, not just as something that is brought to a team (or organization).

The starting point of distributed leadership is the division of labor that characterizes most organizations:<sup>16</sup> rather than limiting themselves to a binary division of leaders and followers, proponents prefer to examine where organizations manifest leadership in their work practices and, when they do, the various forms that takes. To the extent that leadership is shared or dispersed, Gronn explains that it is likely to be aggregated or holistic.<sup>17</sup>

Usefully, a recent study<sup>18</sup> isolated six ways to distribute leadership: (i) formal, (ii) pragmatic, (iii) strategic, (iv) incremental, (v) opportunistic, and (vi) cultural.<sup>19</sup> The categories are neither fixed nor mutually exclusive: each, be it stand-alone or in combination with others, may be appropriate at a given time depending on circumstances. They can also be considered phases in a development process. To begin, an organization would need to create awareness of distributed leadership. In later phases, work to build trust, confidence, knowledge, and attitudes, enriched by feedback, would move it in increments from formal to cultural distribution.

<sup>11</sup> *The Economist*. 2006. Headless—Orpheus Chamber Orchestra. 5 August. The Economist Newspaper Limited.

<sup>12</sup> There may not be much opportunity even there. Much of motivation theory assumes that people are static. They may be from a manager's perspective, but the answer rests with the individual who chooses whether and how to engage. If this argument holds, all that a leader might be able to do is circumscribe the contours of what self-centered and other-centered drives are already at play and help individuals channel these more efficiently and effectively to contribute more.

<sup>13</sup> Peter Gronn has done much to establish its foundations. Notwithstanding, he credits Cecil Gibb, an Australian psychologist, with the first use of the term in 1954 in his chapter on leadership in the first edition of the *Handbook of Social Psychology*. See Cecil Gibb. 1954. Leadership. In Gardner Lindzey (ed.). *The Handbook of Social Psychology*. Addison-Wesley. According to Gronn, Gibb discerned a crucial distinction between focused and distributed leadership. “Focused” stood for the way leadership can for various reasons be concentrated in or monopolized by one person as the focal point of a group's other members. However, because a group's membership and the patterns of influence across that fluctuate, Gibb intuited that leadership is as likely to be distributed as it is to be concentrated or monopolized. Indeed, the members of a group often develop a history or pattern of working during which different persons emerge as influential on account of their specialist knowledge or expertise. Sadly, Gibb's insights then lay dormant for over 3 decades. See Peter Gronn. 2002. Distributed Leadership as a Unit of Analysis. *The Leadership Quarterly*. 13. pp. 423–451.

<sup>14</sup> Proponents of thought leadership press that it must be cultivated as the key form of distributed leadership. The practical implication is that organizations should move beyond simply empowering employees to manage themselves, and start promoting organization-wide leadership conceived as the championing of new ideas.

<sup>15</sup> The unsustainability of a focused model of individual leader omniscience is widely recognized, especially in light of its limitations when dealing with adaptive change. Nevertheless, situational and contingency theories of leadership still shed insight, with a twist: much as situations and cultures, organizations call for different types of leadership and require different skills of that at different moments. The settings that leadership should address can suddenly change and call for norms, authority structures, and adaptive strategies beyond the ken of traditional leadership.

<sup>16</sup> Most theories of leadership only permit a twofold division of labor: people either lead or follow. (The theory of servant leadership is one exception.) Such naive dualism pays no heed to the reality and complexity of business processes and imposes a further layer of involvedness in the form of specialized role titles and job descriptions.

<sup>17</sup> An aggregated pattern is one in which individuals, on different occasions, as part of distinctive activities, for miscellaneous reasons, and for varying periods of time are deemed by their colleagues to exercise leadership. (To note, Gronn's numerical or additive perspective purposely extends no privileges to individuals or groups for providing more leadership than others, makes no assumptions as to what behaviors carry more weight with colleagues, and is prompted by awareness that more than one person counts in contributions to organizational performance.) A holistic pattern is one in which parts combine synergistically to form a new whole. [To note further, Gronn's holistic perspective acknowledges that intuitive working relations emerge when individuals and groups negotiate relationships over time and come to rely on one another. Institutionalized structures and structural relations act as concertive (or conjoint) mechanisms that pool distributed capacity, regularize distributed action, and incorporate these into an organization's governance.]

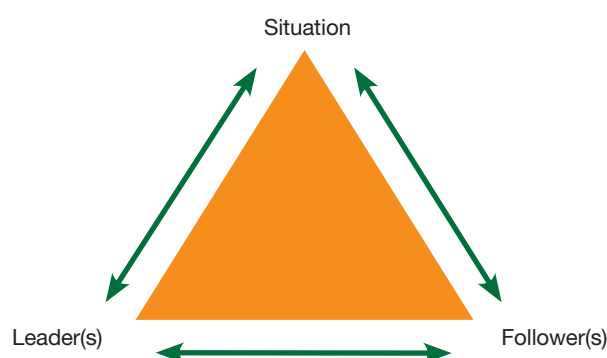
<sup>18</sup> National College for School Leadership. 2004. *Distributed Leadership in Action*. Nottingham.

<sup>19</sup> Key concepts in cultural distribution are agency and reciprocity. As organizations mature from individual control to collective activity married to internal accountability, each staff demonstrates respect, personal regard, competence, and integrity.

**Table: The Orpheus Process**

Principle	Rationale
Put power in the hands of the people doing the work.	Those closest to the ground are in the best position to know market needs and make decisions that impact these. Organizations that empower personnel with true authority can expect better products and services; more satisfied clients, audiences, and partners; and higher profits.
Encourage individual responsibility for product and quality.	The converse of giving authority to those closest to the ground is requiring them to be accountable. Personnel who are entrusted to lead must feel a real and personal responsibility for outcomes.
Create clarity of roles.	Before personnel can comfortably and effectively take on leadership duties, it must be assigned well-defined roles and know what each one is responsible for. These roles must be communicated widely throughout the organization.
Foster horizontal teamwork.	No one has all the answers to every question. Horizontal teams—both formal and informal—that are not artificially constrained by the need to focus attention on narrow issues or opportunities can reach and tap expertise across organizational boundaries to obtain inputs, act on opportunities, solve problems, and make decisions.
Share and rotate leadership.	In most organizations, authority for leadership is vested in certain positions (and not in others): leaders are expected to lead and followers are expected to follow. The higher-up an individual's location on the organizational chart, the more authority his or her position wields. By moving personnel in and out of leadership positions, an organization can tap the leadership potential that exists in individuals and is more often than not ignored or discarded, if not at times punished. Leaders should be selected based on what attributes, behaviors, experience, knowledge, skills, and potential they bring to the table on propitious occasions.
Learn to listen, learn to talk.	Communications oxygenate the bloodstream of high-performance organizations. Individuals must listen to the views and opinions of others, respect what is said and the person saying it, and know when to talk. Two-way communications must be expected and cultivated constantly.
Seek consensus (and build creative systems that favor consensus).	Consensus is built on trust and that is born of participation. Involving personnel in discussions does not take the edge off results; it sharpens them (if participants are willing to listen, be flexible, and compromise on positions). In most organizations, the number of people involved in decisions decreases in direct proportion to the increase in the latter's importance.
Dedicate passionately to your mission.	Passionate personnel care about their organization; its clients, audiences, and partners; and the way they perform to meet needs.

Source: Author.

**Figure 1: Leadership as a Distributed Phenomenon**

Source: Timothy Hallett. 2002. Micro Politics, Symbolic Power, and Leadership: The Case of Chicago Public Elementary Schools. PhD Dissertation. Northwestern University.



Three elements distinguish distributed leadership from other theories of leadership.<sup>20</sup> First, it highlights leadership as an emergent property of a group or network of interacting individuals. Second, it suggests openness in the boundaries of leadership. Third, it entails that multiple types of expertise are distributed across the many, not the few. Fundamentally, however, it is the first of the three characteristics, viz., leadership as the product of concertive activity, that underscores distributed leadership as an emergent property of a group or network.

**“The basic idea of distributed leadership is not very complicated. In any organized system, people typically specialize, or develop particular competencies, that are related to their predispositions, interests, aptitudes, prior knowledge, skills, and specialized roles. [...] Organizing these diverse competencies into a coherent whole requires understanding how individuals vary, how the particular knowledge and skill of one person can be made to complement that of another, and how the competencies of some can be shared with others. In addition, organizing diverse competencies requires understanding when the knowledge and skill possessed by the people within the organization is [sic] not equal to the problem they are trying to solve, searching outside the organization for new knowledge and skill, and bringing it into the organization. [...] Distributed leadership, then, means multiple sources of guidance and direction, following the contours of expertise in an organization, made coherent through a common culture. It is the “glue” of a common task or goal—improvement of instruction—and a common frame of values for how to approach that task—culture—that keeps distributed leadership from becoming another version of loose coupling.”<sup>21</sup>**

— Richard Elmore

## PREAMBLE

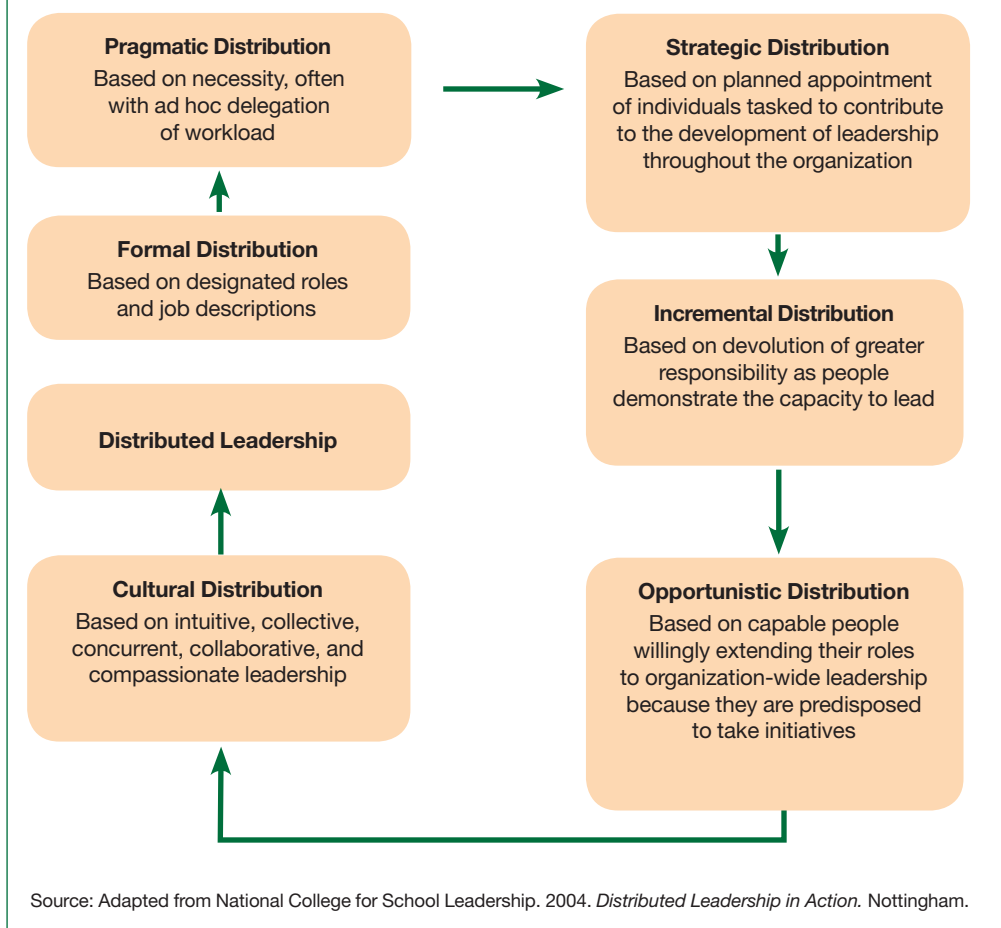
Distributed leadership is reminiscent of the ideal of the learning organization on account of the importance it ascribes to the collective. (It is also consistent with more familiar precepts of empowerment, such as subsidiarity.) With the burgeoning of communities and networks of practice, there is in modern organizations a sense that it is an idea whose time has come. At the end of the day, all leadership is collective: this underscores, indeed imparts new meaning to, concerns of interdependence and interactions.

Without a doubt, distributing leadership for organizational performance has to do with trust and accountability at individual and group levels. Studying requirements for building these surfaces tensions inherent in processes of consultation, command, and consensus building, but in so doing airs them out. In turn, this bolsters confidence to stop directing and intervening, and stand back. From there, one can initiate, then institutionalize, measures to promote distributed leadership and mitigate the factors that inhibit it.

Once again, trust has primacy among the factors that promote distributed leadership. But acceptance of the leadership potential of others pays too, as does work to foster shared goals and promote self-esteem. It goes without saying that visionary human resource management can do much to capacitate an organization: good staffing, continuity, and stability do hearten distributed leadership. Besides the absence of the foregoing promoting factors, inhibiting factors tend to be structural, with the exacerbating circumstance of all-too-commonly heavy workloads, as well as lack of time and space for reflection. ■

<sup>20</sup> See National College for School Leadership. 2003. *Distributed Leadership*. Nottingham.

<sup>21</sup> Richard Elmore. 2000. *Building a New Structure for School Leadership*. The Albert Shanker Institute. Washington, DC.

**Figure 2: A Taxonomy of Leadership Distribution****FURTHER READING**

James Spillane. 2006. *Distributed Leadership*. John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

**COLLABORATION MECHANISMS**

When working with others, efforts sometimes turn out to be less than the sum of the parts. Too often, not enough attention is paid to facilitating effective collaborative practices.





# Drawing Mind Maps

Mind maps are a visual means that represent, link, and arrange concepts, themes, or tasks, with connections usually extending radially from a central topic. They are used by individuals and groups (informally and intuitively) to generate, visualize, structure, and classify these.



## THINKING AS A SKILL

Intelligence is a potential, and thinking is the operating skill through which it acts upon experience. Outside highly technical matters, perception is the most important part of thinking. If most errors of thinking are errors of perception—that being colored by emotions and values—thinking as a skill can be improved by practice and education. Numerous straightforward yet powerful tools encourage creativity and flexibility, and help optimize different styles of reasoning (including analyzing, integrating, planning, and problem solving). They include APC,<sup>1</sup> OPV,<sup>2</sup> PMI,<sup>3</sup> brainstorming, lateral thinking, and mind maps. After they are mastered, these tools can be applied explicitly.

## DEFINITION

We usually write notes as sentences that we break into paragraphs, lists, or bullet points. A mind map is a circular, nonlinear way of organizing information: it shows the connections between a central topic and the relative importance of the concepts, themes, or tasks that one relates to it. It can be applied by individuals and groups to generate, visualize,

structure, and classify these whenever clearer thinking and improved learning will enhance performance and effectiveness.

## ADVANTAGES

Here are a few advantages to using mind maps:

- The process of drawing a mind map is more interesting and entertaining than writing a report, or drafting a standard chart or table.
- The visual quality of mind maps allows users to identify, clarify, classify, summarize, consolidate, highlight, and present the structural elements of a subject more simply than with a standard set of notes. (It also assists review.)
- Mind maps facilitate recall because the clear association and linking of ideas mirrors the way the brain works—keywords and images are remembered with lesser effort than linear notes.<sup>4</sup>
- Mind maps are compact, with no unnecessary words; easy to draw; very flexible; and can summarize pages of information.
- Mind maps help identify gaps in information and shine clarity on important issues.

<sup>1</sup> A stands for Alternatives; P stands for Possibilities; C stands for Choices.

<sup>2</sup> This stands for Other People's Views.

<sup>3</sup> P stands for Plus, or the good points. M stands for Minus, or the bad points. I stands for Interesting, or the interesting points.

<sup>4</sup> Memory is associative, not linear. Any idea probably has thousands of links in one's mind: mind maps allow associations and links to be recorded and reinforced.



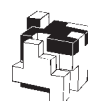
## PROCESS

The process of drawing a mind map can be described in a few steps: (i) start at the center of the page (rather than from the top-left corner); (ii) adopt an open, creative attitude; (iii) associate and link keywords and images freely; (iv) think fast; (v) break black-and-white boundaries with different colors and styles; (vi) do not judge; (vii) keep moving; and (viii) allow gradual organization by adding relationships and connections. ■

## FURTHER READING

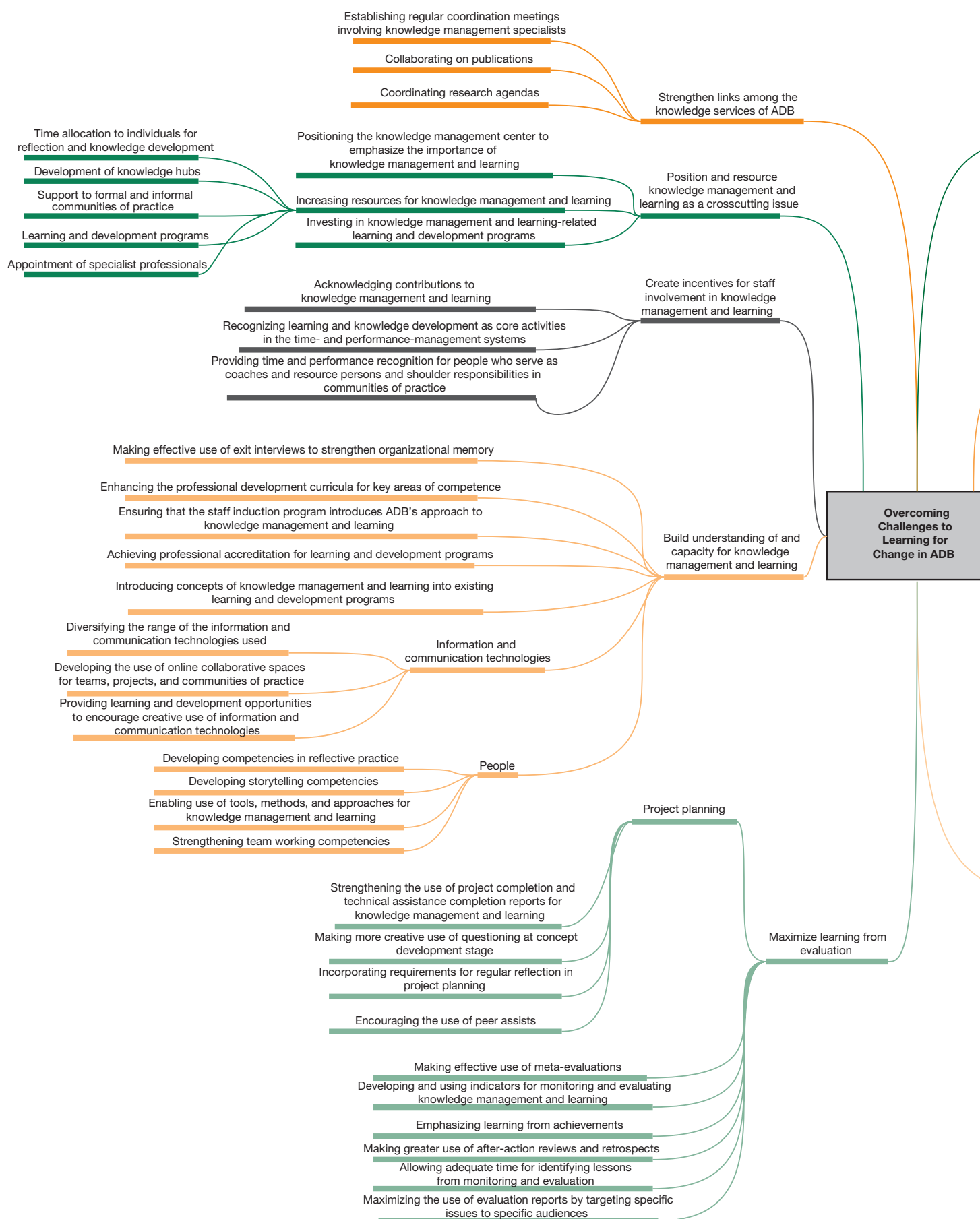
Edward De Bono. 2006. *De Bono's Thinking Course: Powerful Tools to Transform Your Thinking*. BBC Active.

Tony Buzan. 1995. *The Mind Map Book*. London: BBC Books.

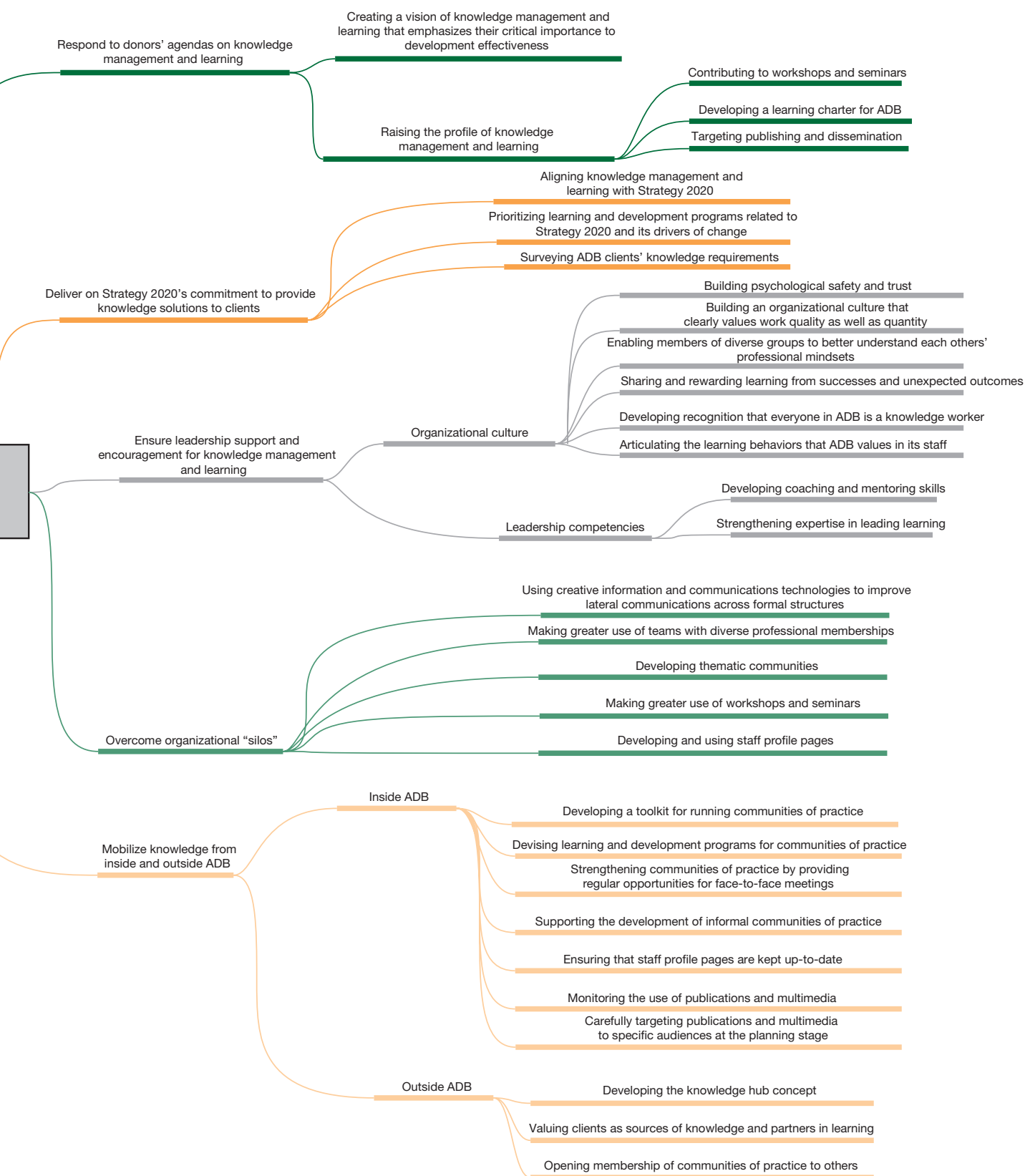


### COLLABORATION MECHANISMS

When working with others, efforts sometimes turn out to be less than the sum of the parts. Too often, not enough attention is paid to facilitating effective collaborative practices.



Source: ADB. 2009. *Learning for Change in ADB*. Manila. Available: [www.adb.org/documents/books/learning-for-change/default.asp](http://www.adb.org/documents/books/learning-for-change/default.asp)





# Exercising Servant Leadership

Servant leadership is now in the vocabulary of enlightened leadership. It is a practical, altruistic philosophy that supports people who choose to serve first, and then lead, as a way of expanding service to individuals and organizations. The sense of civil community that it advocates and engenders can facilitate and smooth successful and principled change.



## PREAMBLE

On 1–3 July 1863, more than 158,000 soldiers fought near the market town of Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, in what proved to be a turning point of the American Civil War (1861–1865). On 19 November 1863, President Abraham Lincoln dedicated the battlefield as a national cemetery. He gave the Gettysburg Address, one of the most quoted speeches in the history of the United States, in 10 sentences and about 2 minutes. Its last words—“... government of the people, by the people, for the people, ...”—have come to define democracy to many.

## BACKGROUND

Ancient schools of thought about great men<sup>1</sup> and more recent (sometimes overlapping) explanations form an ever-growing literature on leadership.<sup>2</sup> In modern times, three broad categories have encompassed related theories: approaches have explored the traits (1940s–1950s) then behaviors or styles (1950s–1960s) of successful leaders; examined the contextual nature of

leadership and the role of followers (1960s–1970s); and investigated what interactions of traits, behaviors, and situations (as well as group facilitation) might allow people to transact or transform for excellence (1980s).<sup>3</sup> At the risk of simplifying, notwithstanding a few notable exceptions,<sup>4</sup> these perspectives have been hierarchical, linear, male, Newtonian, pragmatic and, above all, concerned with the leader as an individual.<sup>5</sup>

## LEADERSHIP AND THE CHALLENGE OF CHANGE<sup>6</sup>

Theory and practice are inexorably intertwined: to understand developments in leadership theory is to fathom the nature of leadership itself. Leadership is difficult because, quintessentially, it must often focus on the challenge of change.<sup>7</sup> Change that is transformational defies easy solutions: it involves value-laden issues; it tests strongly held loyalties; it surfaces deep-seated conflicts. But people do not resist change per se; rather, they refuse to accept the losses that it may cause them to incur.

<sup>1</sup> The great man theory (associated with Thomas Carlyle) became popular in the 19th and 20th centuries, with numerous histories of Roman emperors and charismatic leaders such as Napoleon, Gandhi, Winston Churchill, and Franklin Delano Roosevelt, among others. It assumed that the capacity for leadership is inherent—that great leaders are exceptional people, born with innate qualities, destined to lead, and certainly not made. Trait explanations stemmed from it.

<sup>2</sup> Early studies of leadership, preoccupied with power and influence, date back to Sun Tzu, Plato, and Niccolò Machiavelli. In spite of this, leadership only became a focus of academic studies in the last 60 years—particularly more so in the last 20 years.

<sup>3</sup> The problem with leadership theory is that even though no school of thought is completely defensible many explanations offer interesting insights. (None would have achieved prominence if it had no face validity.) However, they are neither comprehensive nor well-tested. Yet, most make arguments that hold true on occasion—the difficulty is that we do not know which are valid in what circumstances.

<sup>4</sup> Philip Selznick, a political sociologist, was initially ignored by the mainstream. As long ago as 1957, he compared leadership to institutionalization, in the sense that leadership is about infusing values and clarifying purpose in an organization. See Philip Selznick. 1957. *Leadership in Administration: A Sociological Interpretation*. Harper & Row. In 1978, James MacGregor Burns, a biographer, historian, and political scientist, infused his model of transformational leadership with ethical and moral dimensions, and was the first to see the need for leaders to develop a binding and mutually stimulating relationship with followers. See James MacGregor Burns. 1978. *Leadership*. Harper & Row.

<sup>5</sup> Changingminds.org summarizes succinctly the tenets of the main models of leadership. Available: [http://changingminds.org/disciplines/leadership/theories/leadership\\_theories.htm](http://changingminds.org/disciplines/leadership/theories/leadership_theories.htm)

<sup>6</sup> This section draws from Ronald Heifetz and Marty Linsky. Leadership is 1 Percent Inspiration and 99 Percent Perspiration. In Joel Kurtzman, Glenn Rifkin, and Victoria Griffith. 2004. *MBA in a Book: Mastering Business with Attitude*. Three Rivers Press.

<sup>7</sup> It is at times of organizational strain that effective leaders can make a significant and visible impact.

**Figure: Shifting the Burden**

Note: According to Fred Kofman and Peter Senge, one of the reasons the great man theory appeals is that it absolves us of responsibility for developing leadership capabilities more broadly. Viewed systemically, there is a “shifting the burden” structure: a perceived need for leadership (a symptom) can be met by developing capacities throughout the organization (the fundamental solution) or by relying on a heroic leader (the symptomatic solution). Success in finding a heroic leader reinforces beliefs in the group’s own powerlessness, thus making the fundamental solution more difficult.

Source: Fred Kofman and Peter Senge. 1995. *Communities of Commitment: The Heart of Learning Organizations*. In Sarita Chawla and John Renesch, eds. *Learning Organizations: Developing Cultures for Tomorrow’s Workplace*. Productivity Press, Inc.

To exercise leadership is to invite people to make adaptive change (as distinct from technical change that concerned parties address daily)—for this they must learn new ways and discard old habits against the promise of an uncertain outcome. The process is intrinsically disruptive and, therefore, induces disequilibrium and stress.

In a globalizing world of organizations, pressures to change will only increase over the next decades. Given the complexity of the subject, new explanations of leadership are bound to arise and should influence how future leaders behave. Since much of leadership is about change, and the problems that leadership endeavors to address lie with people themselves, those in positions of authority are more often than not apt to collude and shy away from challenges. (Authority is a contract for services: for that reason, people in positions of authority are [paradoxically] rarely authorized to exercise transformational leadership, whatever the job description may advertise.) It follows that *leadership of the people, by the people, for the people* could conduce change better, coaxing them to clarify what is vital and what is not.

## THE DISTRIBUTION OF LEADERSHIP

The idea of the leader may be misplaced, at least in complex, modern organizations. The trends in leadership theory are clear:

explanations have moved from heroic leadership to leadership by power and influence, thence to the interactive nature of leadership, and of late to leadership by consent. If leaders (can be made to) exist throughout an organization, the future may witness the spread of leadership groups, not individual leaders. (Jon Katzenbach and Douglas Smith have written about the “following part of leading.”)<sup>8</sup>

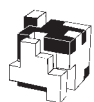
**“The most valuable “currency” of any organization is the initiative and creativity of its members. Every leader has the solemn moral responsibility to develop these to the maximum in all his people. This is the leader’s highest priority.”**

—W. Edwards Deming

Since the 1990s, two interrelated schools of thought with foundations in humanistic psychology, philosophy, politics, social psychology, and sociology rather than management science and psychology, have received growing recognition. They promote people-oriented, or servant, leadership and offer promising notions of informal, emergent, dispersed, or distributed leadership.<sup>9</sup> (To some, not this writer, they are

<sup>8</sup> See Jon Katzenbach and Douglas Smith. 1993. *The Wisdom of Teams: Creating the High-Performance Organization*. Harvard Business School Press.

<sup>9</sup> As for all theories, their explanatory power will need to meet the five criteria set by Thomas Kuhn: (i) accurate—empirically adequate with experimentation and observation; (ii) consistent—internally consistent but also externally consistent with other theories; (iii) broad scope—a theory’s consequences should extend beyond what it was initially designed to explain; (iv) simple—the simplest explanation, in line with Occam’s Razor; and (v) fruitful—a theory should disclose new phenomena or new relationships among phenomena. See Thomas Kuhn. 1962. *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*. University of Chicago Press.



reminiscent of the transformational theory.)<sup>10</sup> Paraphrasing John Kotter,<sup>11</sup> these relatively new schools of thought may fuel the common and persistent sense of urgency, homegrown vision and strategy, cultural anchorage, ownership, broad-based empowerment of people, delegated management for immediate wins, ambient communications, and powerful guiding coalitions needed to overcome what are often massive forces of inertia. Quoting Warren Bennis: “None of us is as smart as all of us ... The Lone Ranger, the incarnation of the individual problem solver, is dead. In his place, we have a new model for creative achievement: The Great Group.”<sup>12</sup>

### EXERCISING SERVANT LEADERSHIP ...

The philosophy and practice of servant leadership was coined and defined by Robert Greenleaf in the 1970s.<sup>13</sup> The general concept is ancient, with roots in the People’s Republic of China (Lao Tzu) and India (Chanakya). Jesus of Nazareth urged his followers to be servants first, and became a messenger of a great religion. It begins with the natural feeling that one wants to serve, to serve first. Then, conscious choice brings one to aspire to lead. Servant leadership seems to touch an innate need in many and probably harks back to the beginning of time.<sup>14</sup>

- **Definition and Best Test.** Servant leadership is about moving people to a higher level of individual and communal self-awareness by leading people at a higher level. Its principal tenet is that it is the duty of a leader to serve followers, his or her key role being to develop, enable, and support team members, helping them fully develop their potential and deliver their best. From this perspective, in a world of organizations, servant-leaders are considered humble stewards of their organization’s resources and capabilities. In a 1970 essay, *The Servant as Leader*, Greenleaf explained: “The servant-leader is servant first ... It begins with the natural feeling that one wants to serve, to serve first. Then conscious choice brings one to aspire to lead. That person is sharply different from one who is leader first, perhaps because of the need to assuage an unusual power drive or to acquire material possessions ... The leader-first and the servant-first are two extreme types. Between them there are shadings and blends that are part of the infinite variety of human nature.”

This is no pie in the sky: the proof of the pudding is in the eating and the test of a servant-leader is one of pragmatism based on visible outcomes. Greenleaf continued: “The best test, and difficult to administer, is: do those served grow as persons; do they, **while being served**, become healthier, wiser, freer, more autonomous, more likely themselves to become servants? **And**, what is the effect on the least privileged in society; will he benefit, or, at least, will he not be further deprived?” Importantly, neither Greenleaf’s definition of a servant-leader nor its best test requires one to hold a formal leadership position. What matters is what we do in “our little corner of the world” and why we are doing it. Indeed, servant-leaders turn leadership into a territory, a field of endeavor in which people can operate—each leveraging individual abilities and capacities—to serve the mission of the organization and the people who make the organization happen. The objective, to repeat, is to enhance the growth of individuals in organizations and promote teamwork and personal involvement.

- **Servant-Leader Attributes.** Larry Spears,<sup>15</sup> who served for 17 years as the head of the Greenleaf Center for Servant Leadership,<sup>16</sup> identified in Greenleaf’s writings 10 characteristics of servant-leaders. They are by no means exhaustive but he views them as central to the development of servant-leaders. (They are, primarily, behavioral in nature.) The attributes are listening, empathy, healing, awareness, persuasion, conceptualization, foresight, stewardship, commitment to the growth of others, and (a concern for) building community. Unlike the models mentioned earlier, which gaze at leadership through the prism of top-down organizational hierarchies, servant leadership emphasizes collaboration, empathy, trust, and the ethical use of power.<sup>17</sup>
- **Caveat.** Servant leadership does not pose as an explanatory or quick-fix theory: it cannot be readily instilled in an organization. But it is a long-term, transformational approach to life and work—in short a way of being—that has the potential to generate positive change in its milieu: when followers see evidence that their leaders truly follow the ideals of servant leadership, they are more likely to become servants themselves.

<sup>10</sup> The primary difference between the two is the focus of the leader. That of the transformational leader is directed at the organization: his or her behavior builds follower commitment toward organizational objectives. The focus of the servant-leader is on others—including fellow employees, clients, and communities: the achievement of organizational objectives is a subordinate outcome.

<sup>11</sup> John Kotter. 1996. *Leading Change*. Harvard Business School Press.

<sup>12</sup> Warren Bennis and Patricia Biederman. 1997. *Organizing Genius: The Secret of Creative Collaboration*. Perseus Books.

<sup>13</sup> Kenneth Blanchard, Stephen Covey, Max DePree, Peter Senge, Margaret Wheatley, and others support it. To Margaret Wheatley, the belief that calls a person to be a servant-leader is the belief of who we are as a species. She thinks that if the real work is to stay together, then we are not only the best resource to move into the future: we are the only resource. We need to learn how to be together—that is the essential work of the servant-leader.

<sup>14</sup> The emphasis on serving a higher purpose has made this model popular in the Church.

<sup>15</sup> Larry Spears (ed.). 1998. *Insights on Leadership: Service, Stewardship, Spirit, and Servant-Leadership*. John Wiley & Sons, Inc. Larry Spears’ identification of themes can help operationalize the concept of servant leadership. A few servant leadership assessment instruments have already been formulated; since the concept continues to gain attention in practice, we can expect to see additional research in the area.

<sup>16</sup> Available: [www.greenleaf.org/](http://www.greenleaf.org/)

<sup>17</sup> Daniel Goleman’s model of emotional intelligence is (almost uncannily) applicable to servant leadership.

“A new moral principle may be emerging which holds that the only authority deserving of one’s allegiance is that which is freely and knowingly granted by the led to the leader in response to, and in proportion to, the clearly evident servant stature of the leader. Those who choose to follow this principle will not casually accept the authority of existing institutions. Rather, they will freely respond only to individuals who are chosen as leaders because they are proven and trusted servants. To the extent that this principle prevails, the only truly viable institutions will be those that are predominantly servant led.”

— Robert Greenleaf

### ... WITH DISTRIBUTED LEADERSHIP

The distributed leadership approach views leadership as a social contract. It shifts the emphasis from developing leaders to developing “leaderful” organizations through concurrent, collective, and compassionate leadership with a collective responsibility for the latter. The distributed leadership theory

- Regards leadership as a process of sense making and direction giving—this constitutes a move from individuals to relationships.
- Rejects the notion of heroic leaders and the focus on top management, and submits a less formalized model whereby leadership is dissociated from organizational hierarchies.
- Distinguishes the exercise of leadership and the exercise of authority, and treats leadership as a decentralized activity that is not, unavoidably, the sole responsibility of formally appointed leaders.
- Aims to nurture leadership capacity through the development of leadership processes and skills in others. ■

### FURTHER READING

Robert Greenleaf. 1977. *Servant Leadership: A Journey into the Nature of Legitimate Power and Greatness*. Paulist Press.

Fred Kofman and Peter Senge. 1995. *Communities of Commitment: The Heart of Learning Organizations*. In Sarita Chawla and John Renesch, eds. *Learning Organizations: Developing Cultures for Tomorrow’s Workplace*. Productivity Press, Inc.



### COLLABORATION MECHANISMS

When working with others, efforts sometimes turn out to be less than the sum of the parts. Too often, not enough attention is paid to facilitating effective collaborative practices.





# Improving Sector and Thematic Reporting

Communities of practice have become an accepted part of organizational development. Learning organizations build and leverage them with effect. To reach their potential, much as other bodies, they stand to gain from healthy reporting. Quality of information and its proper presentation enable stakeholders to make sound and reasonable assessments of performance, and take appropriate action.



## BACKGROUND

On 31 July 2009, Haruhiko Kuroda—ADB President and concurrent Chair of ADB's Board of Directors—approved *Enhancing Knowledge Management Under ADB's Strategy 2020*,<sup>1</sup> a plan of action to advance the knowledge management agenda under *Strategy 2020: The Long-Term Strategic Framework of the Asian Development Bank (2008–2020)*.<sup>2</sup>

Four pillars support the plan: (i) sharpening the knowledge focus in ADB's operations, (ii) empowering the communities of practice (CoPs) hosted by ADB, (iii) strengthening external knowledge partnerships, and (iv) further enhancing staff learning and skills development. The four pillars are closely related: the set of actions/outputs that make up the first focuses on adding value to ADB's operations in its developing member countries; the other three sets deal with how that might be achieved.

These *Knowledge Solutions* showcase the revised guidelines for sector and thematic reporting that ADB then approved on 6 October 2009 to empower the CoPs it hosts. ADB, as

a learning organization, must build CoPs and leverage them effectively to improve the quality of its operations, eventually in the interest of its developing member countries. A coherent set of directional documents is a prerequisite to this, and the new guidelines constitute a practical, incremental, and forward-looking move in that direction.

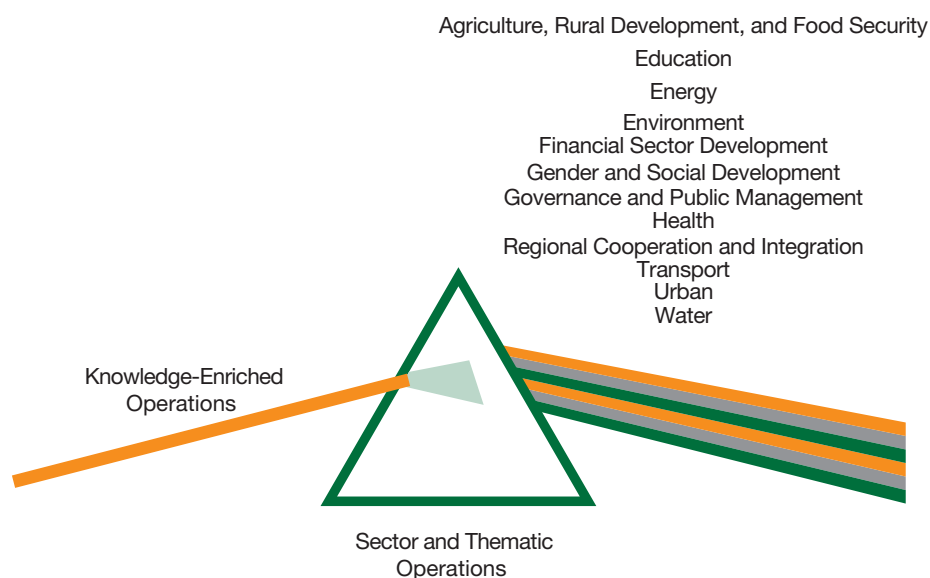
## SEEKING, GIVING, AND USING FEEDBACK

Feedback is a circular causal process whereby some portion of a system's output is returned to the input to control dynamic behavior. In ADB, good feedback from CoPs is essential to realize their potential as collaboration mechanisms.

The revised guidelines for sector and thematic reporting by ADB's CoPs forged a new direction. The rationale was to (i) introduce principles of good reporting based on accuracy, transparency, and economy of knowledge sharing; (ii) provide guidance on key elements of reporting for organizational performance, including the use of knowledge management metrics; (iii) present, to support coordination, a composite

<sup>1</sup> ADB. 2009. *Enhancing Knowledge Management Strategies*. Manila. Available: [www.adb.org/Documents/Information/Knowledge-Solutions/enhancing-knowledge-management-strategies.pdf](http://www.adb.org/Documents/Information/Knowledge-Solutions/enhancing-knowledge-management-strategies.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> Available: [www.adb.org/documents/policies/strategy2020/strategy2020.pdf](http://www.adb.org/documents/policies/strategy2020/strategy2020.pdf)

**Figure: Adding Value to ADB's Operations**

Source: Author.

picture of the progress of work on sector and thematic priorities to inform management systems in ADB, including the annual *Development Effectiveness Reviews*<sup>3</sup> and *Work Program and Budget Framework* papers, as well as the *Annual Administrative and Capital Budget* exercises; and (iv) assess the performance of CoPs, without duplicating data reports generated by the operations departments. The guidelines are flexible to the varying needs of each sector and theme. ■

**“When you wish to instruct, be brief; that men’s minds take in quickly what you say, learn its lesson, and retain it faithfully. Every word that is unnecessary only pours over the side of a brimming mind.”**

— Cicero

**“The pen is the tongue of the mind.”**

— Miguel de Cervantes

**“If you would not be forgotten as soon as you are dead, either write things worth reading or do things worth writing.”**

— Benjamin Franklin

**“I believe more in the scissors than I do in the pencil.”**

— Truman Capote

<sup>3</sup> Available: [www.adb.org/documents/reports/development-effectiveness-review/default.asp](http://www.adb.org/documents/reports/development-effectiveness-review/default.asp)



## Box: Guidelines for Sector and Thematic Reporting

### Introduction

Sector and thematic reporting is part of a comprehensive monitoring system at regional, country, program, project, sector, thematic, and institutional levels. Over the years, from 2005, the CoPs hosted by ADB have developed to support the sectoral and thematic effectiveness of ADB's operations.<sup>a</sup>

#### Exhibit: Archetypal Functions of Communities of Practice

**Filtering.** Organizing and managing information that is worth paying attention to.

**Amplifying.** Taking new, little-known, or little-understood ideas, giving them weight, and making them more widely understood.

**Investing and Providing.** Offering a means to give members the resources they need to carry out their main activities.

**Convening.** Bringing together different, distinct people or groups of people.

**Community Building.** Promoting and sustaining the values and standards of individuals or organizations.

**Learning and Facilitating.** Helping members carry out their activities more efficiently and effectively.

Source: Adapted from Ben Ramalingam, Enrique Mendizabal, and Ed Schenkenberg van Mierop. 2008. Strengthening Humanitarian Networks: Applying the Network Functions Approach. *ODI Background Note*. Overseas Development Institute. Available: [www.odi.org.uk/resources/download/579.pdf](http://www.odi.org.uk/resources/download/579.pdf)

*Enhancing Knowledge Management under Strategy: Proposed Plan of Action (2009–2011)*,<sup>b</sup> approved on 31 July 2009, emphasizes the need to empower CoPs explaining that ADB, as a learning organization, must build CoPs and leverage them effectively to improve the quality of its operations. Good reporting by CoPs is essential to make the most of their potential as collaboration mechanisms and thereby maximize ADB's

development impact, ultimately to the benefit of its clients, audiences, and partners. First, CoPs should be able to clearly present what in their views are key issues that ADB should focus on in terms of strategic studies and new business initiatives. Second, they should be able to distill and synthesize for wider institutional learning what ADB has learned from its sector and thematic operations. Third, flowing from the above, they should be able to demonstrate how ADB's sector and thematic operations have contributed to achieving development effectiveness. In this sense, reporting by CoPs should be seen as integral to overall reporting on that.

To better accomplish their functions under *Strategy 2020: The Long-Term Strategic Framework of the Asian Development Bank (2008–2020)*,<sup>c</sup> the guidelines on sector and thematic level reporting are hereby revised to ensure focus on crucial areas and coverage of assessments and results in high-quality, reader-friendly reports that will inform the annual *Development Effectiveness Reviews*<sup>d</sup> and *Work Program and Budget Framework* papers. The following suggests what sector and thematic level reporting is included, yet acknowledges that it should be adapted to the particular needs of each sector and theme. In the guidelines, CoPs are taken to mean the larger communities of interest and practice of which formal sector and thematic committees are a functional subset.

### Strategic Focus of Reports

Sector and thematic reports would track the progress of broader results in terms of outputs and outcomes, and present succinct “value” and “impact” stories that illustrate challenges and accomplishments in the domain of each CoP.<sup>e</sup> Departmental results, aspects of ADB's corporate results framework, and Millennium Development Goals (MDG) results aligning with a particular sector and theme would be considered. Management and staff would use the reports as key internal monitoring and evaluation documents that guide the activities of CoPs to strengthen sector and thematic performance in ADB's operations. They might also be disseminated externally in a form that appeals to the public.

### Focal Points for Reports

In consultation with the respective CoP, the lead/principal specialist assigned by the Budget, Personnel, and Management Systems Department (BPMSD) would be responsible for coordinating and preparing triennial (Section I) sector and thematic reports and participating in monitoring and evaluating progress (Section II). A *community convenor*, chosen by CoP members (and who may not necessarily be the lead/principal specialist assigned by BPMSD), would be responsible, working collaboratively with CoP members and the lead/principal sector specialist, for preparing annual reports focusing on the CoP (Section II).<sup>f</sup>

<sup>a</sup> ADB. 2009. *In Focus Series: Communities of Practice*. Manila. Available: [www.adb.org/media/infocus/2009/communities-practice.asp](http://www.adb.org/media/infocus/2009/communities-practice.asp)

<sup>b</sup> ADB. 2009. *Enhancing Knowledge Management Strategies*. Manila. Available: [www.adb.org/documents/information/knowledge-solutions/enhancing-knowledge-management-strategies.pdf](http://www.adb.org/documents/information/knowledge-solutions/enhancing-knowledge-management-strategies.pdf)

<sup>c</sup> Available: [www.adb.org/documents/policies/strategy2020/strategy2020.pdf](http://www.adb.org/documents/policies/strategy2020/strategy2020.pdf)

<sup>d</sup> Available: [www.adb.org/documents/reports/development-effectiveness-review/default.asp](http://www.adb.org/documents/reports/development-effectiveness-review/default.asp)

<sup>e</sup> See [www.adb.org/mfdr/default.asp](http://www.adb.org/mfdr/default.asp). To note, ADB's Managing for Development Results framework requires regional departments to consolidate sector and thematic reporting of outputs and outcomes. However, the executive and operations dashboards allow management and staff access to basic data on performance of sectors/themes by division, country, department, and ADB-wide. Hence, it is no longer necessary to include such data in sector and thematic reports. Notwithstanding, during the preparation process, these sources should be consulted and analyzed to inform content.

<sup>f</sup> Where no CoP exists or functions, the lead/principal specialist prepares both sections. However, Section II would likely be truncated.

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Box continued

### List of Sectors and Themes

The sectors and themes to be monitored and reported on would follow the list in the updated classification system (Annex I). Each sector report would include thematic mainstreaming as an important aspect. Likewise, thematic reports would indicate the progress of sector-wise mainstreaming as appropriate.

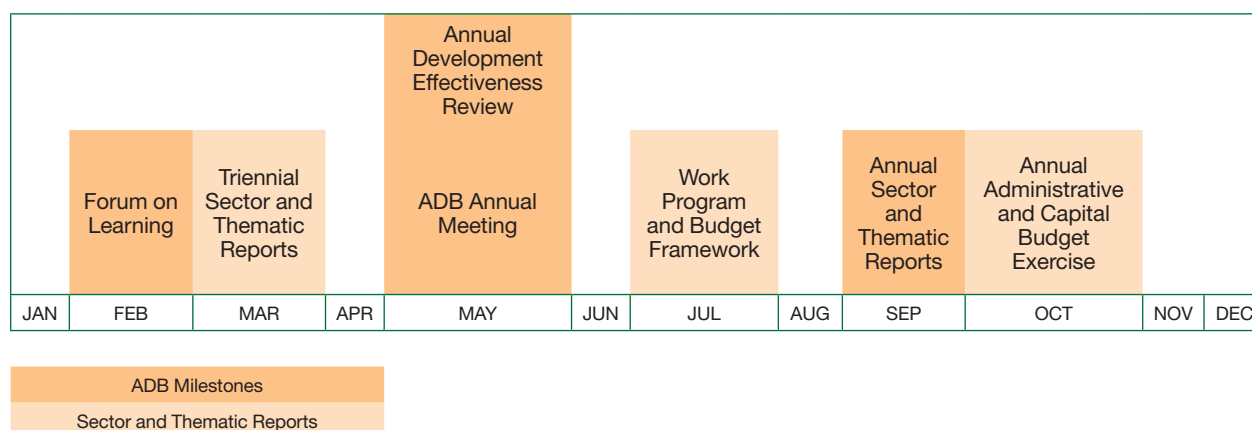
### Period and Periodicity

Full reports would be written every 3 years, with an annual update on the progress, activities, and plans of corresponding CoPs prepared collaboratively by the CoPs. Annex I lists the years of the next reports. Annual reports would be due by the end of the third quarter of each year to feed into the *Annual Administrative and Capital Budget* exercises. Triennial reports would be due at the end of the first quarter to feed the annual *Development Effectiveness Reviews* and *Work Program and Budget Framework* papers. They might also inform ADB's annual meeting.

namely, a scorecard to summarize the performance of a sector and theme in ADB's operations.

*Section II: Assessing the Performance of CoPs* (annual update) would be limited to 15 pages of main text and aim, principally, to demonstrate the contributions of CoPs with good practices and lessons. This section would include a plan of activities with estimated budget figures. It might be usefully informed by annual surveys of the perceptions of CoP members, themselves informed by or building on the results of the *2009 Survey of the CoPs Hosted by ADB*,<sup>9</sup> and those of the annual Most Admired Knowledge Enterprise survey that ADB conducts. Annex III provides a recommended tool, namely, a sample scorecard with which to summarize CoP performance. The CoPs must meaningfully adapt the format of Section II and the scorecard tools to ensure the report is useful to both the CoPs and to Management.

**Figure: Coincidence of Sector and Thematic Reports with ADB Milestones**



Source: Author.

### Content

Though not prepared together each year, the two sections are mutually supportive. Section I contains priority strategic directions and broad results evaluation, while Section II looks at good practice and lessons more specifically. Planning and budgeting in Section II will be able to draw from analysis and conclusions of Section I.

*Section I: Performance of Sector and Theme in ADB's Operations* (every 3 years) would be limited to 30 pages of main text. Each report would have a core narrative, as suggested by Section I focusing on strategic directions and results evaluation. It might be usefully informed by discussions at retreats and regular peer gatherings. Apart from this, there could be a focus on special areas of interest that arose during the period reported against, placed in an appendix. Another appendix could contain brief "value" and "impact" stories illustrating the findings of the report with direct experience. Annex II provides a recommended tool,

### Methods

The reporting process would generally begin by consulting CoP members on the task at hand and seeking performance information about both the sector and theme and the CoP. Rather than limiting the information to descriptive data, eliciting "value" and "impact" stories from CoP members and other interested parties would give Management and staff a better picture of work in the sector and theme. Reviewing key documents and identifying trends across the sector or theme can be useful. Trends and patterns in the quantitative data on sectors and themes from ADB's information management system can be interpreted at different levels of operation. Informal interviews could be conducted with CoP members and with Management. However, the most beneficial approach would be to gather CoP participants together for a planning/evaluation session to interpret findings and discuss lessons around key issues in the sector and theme

<sup>9</sup> Available: [www.adb.org/documents/reports/consultant/strengthening-communities-of-practice.pdf](http://www.adb.org/documents/reports/consultant/strengthening-communities-of-practice.pdf)

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Box continued

and what activities the CoP can undertake to support change. This group might also choose a unifying focus for the report as it emerges from deliberation. Many tools and metrics support these processes, including Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT); outcome mapping; appreciative inquiry; search conferences; and the like (see scorecards in Annex II and Annex III).<sup>h</sup>

### Report Recommendations

Reports will often include recommendations to point to a direction in which positive changes can be made. When a recommendation is made, it should be (i) fully supported by and flow from the associated observations and conclusions, (ii) aimed at correcting the underlying causes of the deficiency, and (iii) directed specifically at the entity or entities with the responsibility to act on it. A recommendation should be clearly stated. It should be (i) succinct, straightforward, and contain enough detail to make sense on its own; (ii) broadly stated (stating what needs to be done while leaving the specifics of how to do it to entity officials); and (iii) positive in tone and content. Crucially, a recommendation should also be action-oriented. It should be (i) practical (able to be implemented in a reasonable time frame, taking into account constraints); (ii) cost-effective (the benefits of implementing it will outweigh the costs); (iii) efficient (optimizing the use of resources); (iv) results-oriented (giving some indication of what the intended outcome is, ideally in measurable terms); and (v) able to be followed up (the originating entity will be able to determine whether it has been acted upon).

### Management Forum and Responses

Feedback is a circular causal process whereby some portion of a system's output is returned to the input to control dynamic behavior. Good feedback by the CoPs hosted by ADB is essential to make the most of their potential as collaboration mechanisms and thereby maximize ADB's development impact, ultimately to the benefit of its clients, partners, and audiences. Management responses to reports are likewise necessary. Upon release of triennial reports, the

lead/principal specialist should schedule an informal session with Management to discuss the report's findings and recommendations. Members of the relevant CoP should be invited to participate. Such interaction can help clarify understanding and motivate CoP members to move forward with action. Similarly, the annual reports (Section II) should be discussed with relevant managers in a constructive CoP-led open forum upon release. All reports would be coursed to the Vice Presidency for Knowledge Management and Sustainable Development (VP-KM&SD) through the Director General, Regional and Sustainable Development Department (DG, RSDD) or, as the case may be, through Head, Office of Regional Economic Integration. (New CoPs, hosted by other offices and departments, would course their reports to VP-KM&SD through relevant heads.) Management would meet the initiating CoP and/or relevant offices and departments, consider the highlights of reports, and provide guidance on recommendations. Beyond Management, the reports should be made available to all staff on the intranet and announced in *ADB Today*. The reports may lead to additional discussions, brown-bag seminars, or other interactive means to explore issues raised.

### Resource Implications

Resource requirements of up to two-and-a-half (2.5) person-months of professional staff and two-and-a-half (2.5) person-months of consulting services would be required to prepare a full report for each sector and theme, as the guidelines propose, every 3 years. Annual updates could be completed with 2 weeks of consulting services through a facilitated retreat for CoP members, with the results consolidated in a report. Based on these estimates and the current number of sectors and themes, the total revised resource needs for implementing this reporting program is about 22 person-months of professional staff<sup>i</sup> and 22 months of consulting services per year.

### Others

Annex IV articulates ways to empower the CoPs hosted by ADB for better knowledge generation and sharing.

<sup>h</sup> The *Knowledge Solutions* series offers guidance on many related tools, methods, and approaches. Available: [www.adb.org/documents/information/knowledge-solutions/default.asp](http://www.adb.org/documents/information/knowledge-solutions/default.asp). For guidance on CoPs, for example, see ADB. 2008. *Building Communities of Practice*. Available: [www.adb.org/documents/information/knowledge-solutions/building-communities-practice.pdf](http://www.adb.org/documents/information/knowledge-solutions/building-communities-practice.pdf)

<sup>i</sup> This level of staff effort may not be uniform. A large CoP, such as the Water Group, may involve many more professional staff hours in participatory consultation than a smaller, less active CoP. This is not a problem if we assume the investment to deliver a commensurately higher benefit in return in terms of ownership and participation in the sector or theme.

Source: Author.

**Table 1: Sector and Thematic Reports: Suggested<sup>a</sup> Outline of Contents for Section I: Performance of Sectors and Themes in ADB's Operations** (every 3 years)

Subject and Guiding Questions	Indicator/Method of Assessment	Source of Data/Method of Feedback
<b>Executive Summary and Key Messages to Management</b>		
<b>Introduction</b>		
Period covered	Not applicable.	Not applicable.
Relevant background information		
Target audience		
Structure of the report		
<b>Regional Trends in the Concerned Sector and Thematic Area</b>		
Status and outlook of the sector and thematic area	CoP deliberations; MDG indicators (as applicable); proxy indicators (for CPSs); RSDD assessments;	Regional MDG reports, Key Indicators for Asia and the Pacific, RCPS documents, reports of bilateral and multilateral agencies, data from country sources, CPSs, etc.
How has ADB's work in this sector and theme contributed to	Portfolio analysis for impact and outcome contributions of sector and thematic activities to Strategy 2020, particularly on	
(i) achieving related MDGs? (where applicable)	(i) vision (an Asia and Pacific region free of poverty);	
(ii) achieving Level 1 regional outcomes in ADB's Corporate Results Framework?	(ii) strategic agenda (inclusive economic growth, environmentally sustainable growth, regional integration); and	
(iii) supporting Strategy 2020?	(iii) drivers of change (private sector development and private sector operations, good governance and capacity development, gender equity, knowledge solutions, partnerships).	
<b>Contributions to Sector and Thematic Policy and Strategy<sup>b</sup></b>		
Contribution to key elements of sector and thematic policy or strategy (specify examples), action plans and their achievements, and determining whether review is necessary	RSDD/Committee/CoP assessments	ADB strategy and policy updates, TA reports, TCRs, RRP, PCR, PERs, CPS completion reports, CAPEs, special evaluation studies, etc.
Role of ADB knowledge products in the sector and theme		
Crosscutting efforts with other sectors and themes		
Mainstreaming themes in sectors		
<b>Contributions to Regional and Subregional Cooperation</b>		
Contribution of sector and theme to RCPS	CoP deliberations	Regional MDG reports, Asia Economic Monitor reports, RCPS documents, MIS data, reports from regional departments on regional activities, RSDD, etc.
Regional activities conducted per sector and thematic area	Contribution to RCPS outcomes Assessment of regional activities	

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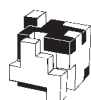
Subject and Guiding Questions	Indicator/Method of Assessment	Source of Data/Method of Feedback
<b>Contributions to Country-Level Operations (Inclusive Economic Growth, Environmentally Sustainable Growth, Regional Integration)</b>		
How has ADB's work in this sector and theme contributed to	CoP deliberations	National MDG reports, CPSs, COSO data, MIS data,
(i) outcomes in ADB's Corporate Results Framework [country outcomes];	Assessment of CPS documents by RSDD	country performance assessments (poverty,
(ii) quality of sector and thematic assessments and road maps in CPSs finalized during the review period	Stories of innovations (particularly in project/program design)	economic, thematic, and sector assessments), RRP, IED reports, reports from regional departments, etc.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>conformity with sector and thematic policies;</li> <li>linkage to CPS outcomes and the three pillars of the PRS;</li> <li>consistency with sector and thematic assessments;</li> <li>depth, comprehensiveness, and data quality;</li> <li>partnerships and work of other stakeholders;</li> </ul>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(iii) sector and thematic implementation record</li> <li>contribution to CPS outcomes;</li> <li>strengthening borrowers capacity in the sector and theme; and</li> <li>portfolio performance issues, implementation.</li> </ul>		
<b>Partnerships</b>		
Funding generated, including bilateral funds	CoP deliberations	MIS data, OCO data, PSOD data, reports from regional departments, NGO Center, reports from regional departments
Participation of NGOs/civil society organizations	Generation of cofinancing	
Harmonization	Generation of bilateral grants/funds	
	Approval of SWAps	
	Projects with NGO/civil society participation	
	Joint projects/conferences	
<b>Operational and Organizational Effectiveness</b>		
How has ADB's work in this sector and theme performed against	CoP deliberations	ADB Annual Reports, Development Effectiveness Reviews, etc.
(i) portfolio performance	Specific particular investment tools and modalities that are significantly affecting the sector and theme	
(ii) ADB's Corporate Results Framework targets for operational effectiveness [Level 3]; and	Strategic alignment of sector and theme in pipelines	
(iii) budgetary resources and business processes (efficiency) [Level 4].		
<b>Human Resources</b>		
Skills mix and adequacy (use competency framework if available)	CoP deliberations	BPMSD data, CoPs, reports from regional departments, etc.
How has ADB's work in this sector and theme performed against ADB's Corporate Results Framework for use of human resources [Level 4]?	Gaps/surpluses of specialist positions in departments <sup>c</sup>	
	Unfilled vacancies	
	Percentage of specialists who completed training requirements	

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Table continued

Subject and Guiding Questions	Indicator/Method of Assessment	Source of Data/Method of Feedback
<b>Conclusions and Recommendations for Future Activities</b>		
What are the conclusions?	CoP deliberations	Annual and triennial reports from CoPs, consultations with partners, RSDD, etc.
What changes are required for more effective sector and thematic outcomes in the future, including	Overall RSDD recommendations	
(i) key issues and considerations?		
(ii) recommendations about future programs?		
(iii) suggestions on project quality, and quality of sector and thematic assessments and road maps?		
(iv) analysis of existing policy and strategy and determining whether review is necessary?		
(v) human resources and other suggestions?		
<b>Appendixes: Value Stories, Impact Stories, Special Topics</b>		
<p><sup>a</sup> Both format and content are flexible and need to be adapted (and specified) to each sector or theme.</p> <p><sup>b</sup> The Independent Evaluation Department has developed a framework for assessing the soundness of a strategy: (i) adequacy of strategic gap analysis through baseline indicators and targets; (ii) quality of sector analysis; (iii) adequacy of option identification; (iv) internal integrity of strategy; (v) partnership and external consistency; (vi) positioning for organizational competence and comparative advantage; (vii) acceptability to key stakeholders; (viii) feasibility of strategy; and (ix) basis for strategy selection.</p> <p><sup>c</sup> Assessment of gaps may require collecting information on the actual number of specialists working in the specialist positions as opposed to the number of specialists recruited.</p> <p>BPMSD = Budget, Personnel, and Management Systems Department, CAPE = country assistance program evaluation, CoP = community of practice, COSO = Central Operations Services Office, CPS = country partnership strategy, IED = Independent Evaluation Department, MIS = management information system, MDG = millennium development goal, NGO = nongovernment organization, OCO = Office of Co-financing Operations, PCR = project completion report, PER = project/program evaluation report, PRS = poverty reduction strategy, RCPS = Regional Cooperation Partnership Strategy, RRP = report and recommendation of the President, RSDD = Regional and Sustainable Development Department, SPD = Strategy and Policy Department, SWAps = sector-wide approaches, TA = technical assistance, TCR = technical assistance completion report, UN = United Nations.</p> <p>Source: Author.</p>		



**Table 2: Sector and Thematic Reports: Suggested<sup>a</sup> Outline of Contents for Section II: Assessing the Performance of CoPs**  
(annual update)

Subject and Guiding Questions	Indicator/Method of Assessment	Source of Data/Method of Feedback
<b>Executive Summary and Key Messages to Management</b>		
<b>Introduction</b>		
Period covered	Not applicable.	Not applicable.
Relevant background information		
Target audience		
Structure of the report		
<b>Performance Score and Critical Success Factors</b>		
Customize indicators and evidence for a scorecard summarizing CoPs' performance (see Annex III).	Specific to the plans of the CoP, minutes of meetings, records of activities, CoP deliberations.	Projects, knowledge products and services, innovative activities in the sector or thematic area over the past year, surveys of CoPs, etc.
(i) Where has your CoP come from? Where is it now? Where would you like to bring it? Illustrate.		
(ii) How does your CoP filter, organize, and manage information? What should the group pay attention to? Illustrate.		
(iii) How does your CoP take new or unfamiliar ideas and help participants understand them? Illustrate.		
(iv) How does your CoP help participants locate or successfully acquire resources to work in their sector and theme more effectively? Illustrate.		
(v) How does your CoP bring together people with different experiences or perspectives to share ideas and practice? Illustrate.		
(vi) How does your CoP build a sense of community based on shared values and professional standards? Illustrate.		
(vii) How does your CoP help participants work better and do things that are more effective? Illustrate.		
<b>Knowledge in Practice<sup>b</sup></b>		
How does your CoP engage its members in reflection on practice? Illustrate.	CoP deliberations, staff interviews	Peer assists, after-action reviews, retrospects, coaching and mentoring, exit interviews, etc.
Do you use any ways of helping staff share their practical tacit knowledge <sup>a</sup> with one another? Illustrate.		
<b>Contributions to Knowledge Management and Good Practices</b>		
Is your CoP contributing to the spread of good practices in its sector and thematic area through	Assessments of all knowledge products and services including economic and sector work, guidelines, tool kits, etc.	CoP deliberations, brownbag seminars, Knowledge Showcases, K-Hub presentations, Learning Curves, sector and thematic newsletters, etc.
(i) knowledge generation?		
(ii) knowledge sharing?		
(iii) Illustrate.		

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Subject and Guiding Questions	Indicator/Method of Assessment	Source of Data/Method of Feedback
<b>Plans and Recommendations for CoP Focus and Activities</b>		
In light of past performance and based on the analysis of the aspects highlighted above and the assessment framework, what changes are required for more effective sector and thematic CoP outcomes in the future, including (i) recommendations about your CoP's future program? (ii) suggestions regarding knowledge management?	CoP deliberations, guidance of committee and sector and thematic lead/principal specialist	Projects, knowledge products and services, innovative activities in the sector or thematic area over the past year, surveys of CoPs, etc.
<b>Appendix: Value Stories, Impact Stories</b>		
Highlight key stories that illustrate the knowledge generation and sharing activities that occurred in your CoP this past year	CoP deliberations, staff interviews	ADB Annual Reports, stories of change, etc.
<p>CoP = community of practice, RSDD = Regional and Sustainable Development Department.</p> <p><sup>a</sup> Both format and content are flexible and need to be adapted (and specified) to each sector or theme.</p> <p><sup>b</sup> Tacit knowledge is personalized knowledge that people carry in their heads. It is more difficult to formalize and communicate than explicit knowledge, but can be shared through discussion, storytelling, and personal interactions.</p> <p>Source: Author.</p>		



## Annex I: Updated Sector and Theme Classification System

Sector Reports, Section I: Sector Performance in ADB's Operations		Next Triennial Report (Q1)		Sector Reports, Section II (annually Q3): Assessing the Performance of CoPs	
1. Agriculture and Natural Resources		2009		Agriculture, Rural Development, and Food Security CoP	
2. Education		2010		Education CoP	
3. Energy		2011		Energy CoP	
4. Finance <sup>a</sup>		2009		–	
5. Health and Social Protection		2010		Health CoP	
6. Industry and Trade <sup>b</sup>		2011		–	
7. Public Sector Management		2009		Financial Management CoP	
8. Transport and ICT		2010		Transport CoP ICT CoP	
9. Water Supply, Sanitation and Waste Management		2011		Water CoP Urban Development CoP	

Thematic Reports, Section I: Thematic Performance in ADB's Operations		Next Triennial Report (Q1)		Thematic Reports, Section II (annually Q3): Assessing the Performance of CoPs	
1. Capacity Development <sup>c</sup>		2009		–	
2. Economic Growth		2010		Poverty Reduction and Inclusive Growth CoP	
3. Environmental Sustainability		2011		Environment CoP	
4. Gender Equity		2009		Gender CoP	
5. Governance		2010		Governance CoP NGO and Civil Society CoP	
6. Social Development		2011		Social Development CoP Resettlement CoP	
7. Private Sector Development <sup>d</sup>		2009		–	
8. Regional Cooperation and Integration <sup>e</sup>		2010		–	

<sup>a</sup> No CoP.  
<sup>b</sup> No CoP.  
<sup>c</sup> Reports only. No CoP or committee.  
<sup>d</sup> Reports only. No CoP or committee.  
<sup>e</sup> No CoP.

CoP = community of practice, ICT = information and communication technology, NGO = nongovernment organization.

Source: Author.

**Annex II: Summary of Sector and Thematic Performance in ADB's Operations<sup>a</sup>**

Criteria	Indicator (illustrative)	Evidence (illustrative)	Score
Asia and the Pacific Development Outcomes (Board of Governors Perspective)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>MDG indicator(s)</li> <li>Corporate Results Framework and other indicators</li> <li>Regional cooperation</li> <li>Policy and strategy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sector and theme contribution to the MDGs and poverty reduction in the region and subregions</li> <li>Strategic objectives, including client and audience, well defined and linked to relevant corporate, country, sector, and thematic strategies, and core business processes.</li> <li>Clear purpose for programs and activities</li> </ul>	G A R G A R G A R G A R
Contribution to Country Development Outcomes (DMC Client Perspective)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strategic focus in operations</li> <li>CPS</li> <li>By particular subsector and subtheme</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Contributions to country outcomes against stated objectives</li> <li>By particular subsector and subtheme satisfaction of DMC clients</li> <li>Harmonization</li> </ul>	G A R G A R G A R
Effectiveness of Projects (Beneficiary Perspective)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Operational quality</li> <li>Partnership</li> <li>By particular key activity area of sector and theme</li> <li>Mainstreaming</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Successful attainment of objectives through tangible "value" and "impact" stories</li> <li>Jointly funded projects</li> <li>By particular key activity area of sector and theme</li> <li>Participation of NGOs and civil society organizations</li> <li>Satisfaction of project beneficiaries</li> </ul>	G A R G A R G A R G A R
Organizational Effectiveness (Management Perspective)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Human resources</li> <li>Budget adequacy</li> <li>Business processes and practices</li> <li>Portfolio performance</li> <li>Finance mobilization</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Adequate skills mix</li> <li>Adequate and well-tracked resources for innovation</li> <li>Quality of support and administrative services</li> <li>Adequacy of operational tools</li> </ul>	G A R G A R G A R G A R
Learning and Growth (Staff Perspective)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Knowledge management</li> <li>Professional development</li> <li>Technology</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Views of staff on knowledge products and services as responsive, state-of-the-art, and future-oriented</li> <li>Integration of knowledge products and services into staff and client (team) learning activities</li> <li>Ready access of staff to up-to-date sector and thematic knowledge enabling them to do their jobs</li> <li>Lessons learned and good practices captured and shared to ADB and clients</li> <li>Applies appropriate technology</li> </ul>	G A R G A R G A R

CPS = country partnership strategy, DMC = developing member country, MDG = millennium development goal, NGO = nongovernment organization.

**G Green:** "On track" (More than 50% of the indicators in the group have shown improvements over baselines or previous periods).

**A Amber:** "Potential regression" (Results are mixed: equal number of indicators improving or beginning to stagnate or regress).

**R Red:** "Stagnated or regressed" (More than half of indicators in the group stagnating or regressing over 2 or more years).

<sup>a</sup> Scorecard categories and content are flexible and must be adapted (and specified) to each sector or theme.

Source: Author.



### Annex III: Summary of Community of Practice Performance<sup>a</sup>

Criteria	Indicator (Illustrative)	Evidence (Illustrative)	Score
Relevance and Focus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Programs and activities help strengthen ADB's work in sector and theme advancing corporate and country priorities.</li> <li>CoP participants are committed to improvement.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>CoP strategic objectives, including client and audience, well defined and linked to relevant corporate, country, sector, and thematic strategies, and core business processes</li> <li>Clear purpose for programs and activities</li> <li>Level of participation is strong across activities.</li> </ul>	<p>G A R</p> <p>G A R</p>
Quality and Timeliness of Knowledge Products and Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Aggregated knowledge is tailored and timed to needs, and are clearly presented, technically sound, and state-of-the-art.</li> <li>CoP has realistic timetable for delivery.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Demand for knowledge products and services</li> <li>Staff, CoP member, client, and expert reviews and surveys</li> <li>ADB/CoP content management processes</li> <li>Staff view knowledge products and services as responsive and future-oriented</li> </ul>	<p>G A R</p> <p>G A R</p>
Access to Practical Knowledge and Reach in ADB	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>CoP members demonstrate trust, respect, mutual support.</li> <li>CoP is widely inclusive across departments and seniority.</li> <li>CoP members have ready access to up-to-date knowledge to do their jobs.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Dissemination tracking, usability testing, usage monitoring of published and online knowledge, and information and knowledge services</li> <li>Staff, CoP member, client, and expert participation in knowledge sharing events and feedback</li> <li>CoP application of appropriate technology to support activities and communicate</li> </ul>	<p>G A R</p> <p>G A R</p> <p>G A R</p>
Utility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Shared knowledge are adopted and applied in policies, strategies, partnerships, programs, and projects.</li> <li>Lessons learned and good practices are captured and shared to ADB and clients.</li> <li>CoP knowledge products and services are part of staff work plans and performance reviews, and supported by management.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Knowledge management strategy articulated in sector and thematic strategies and sector road maps in country partnership strategies (CPS)</li> <li>Knowledge products and services built into staff and client (team) learning activities</li> <li>Staff, CoP member, client, and expert surveys and activity self-assessments</li> <li>Self- and independent assessments of knowledge-sharing process in CPSs, and lending and nonlending services</li> <li>CoP members actively seeking and giving support</li> </ul>	<p>G A R</p> <p>G A R</p> <p>G A R</p>
Likely Impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ADB and client knowledge bases and capacities are enhanced.</li> <li>Improvements are targeted in ADB development results.</li> <li>Staff development is enhanced with greater work engagement.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ongoing knowledge assessments</li> <li>Successful attainment of objectives is demonstrated through tangible "value" and "impact" stories</li> <li>Sector and thematic reports demonstrate improved outcomes against stated objectives</li> </ul>	<p>G A R</p> <p>G A R</p> <p>G A R</p>
Cost Effectiveness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Programs and activities are carried out without the right amount of resources to achieve objectives.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tracking and benchmarking costs of activities</li> <li>Resources are adequate for innovation</li> </ul>	<p>G A R</p>

CoP = community of practice.

**G Green:** "On track" (More than 50% of the indicators in the group have shown improvements over baselines or previous periods).

**A Amber:** "Potential regression" (Results are mixed: equal number of indicators improving or beginning to stagnate or regress).

**R Red:** "Stagnated or regressed" (More than half of indicators in the group stagnating or regressing over 2 or more years).

<sup>a</sup> Scorecard categories and content are flexible and must be adapted (and specified) to each sector or theme.

Source: Author.

## Annex IV: Empowering Communities of Practice to Generate and Share Knowledge

The communities of practice (CoPs) hosted by ADB encompass both formal sector and thematic committees and what were previously called “informal networks.” Any staff can join as a member of one or more CoPs. Each CoP is proposed to have a *community convenor*, chosen by CoP members, normally an expert in the concerned sector and theme, and active in managing funds designated for the CoP, sharing articles and newsletters, driving informal dialogues with other staff to share information, leading annual reporting (including preparation of annual two-pagers for broad circulation specifying the domain, community, and function and achievements of the CoP, as well as its plans for the future, e.g., finance, clients, internal processes, and innovation and learning, and external knowledge partnerships), and updating websites, among other things. The *community convenor* need not be the sector and thematic committee chairs or co-chairs. The duration of any CoP depends on continuing interest from CoP members (but also demand from staff); thus, some may serve their purpose over the span of only a couple years and then choose to disband. He or she would confer with the relevant sector and thematic committee and be responsible to the CoP.

The committees reside within CoP's (where corresponding CoPs exist), each having at least five to eight members holding at least level 5 positions. Committee chairs and co-chairs would be appointed by VP-KM&SD. Chairs and co-chairs would appoint members of their respective committees while keeping DG, RSDD and VP-KM&SD (through RSDD-KM) informed. The committee chairs or co-chairs have no formal authority over the CoP at-large but function as members of the CoP.

ADB's sector and thematic committees would continue to be tapped as advisors on policies and strategies for sectors and themes. They would (i) provide advice on formulation of sector and thematic policies and strategies; (ii) propose actions to address implementation issues associated with sector and thematic policies and strategies, for instance, through the annual and triennial reports prepared by the lead/principal specialist; (iii) represent the interests of their respective sector and thematic areas at management level at annual meetings with VP-KM&SD; and (iv) act as advocates of CoP operations and achievements. While CoPs are formed at the initiative of staff, *Strategy 2020*, or ADB's current and changing priorities would drive the formation of committees as they are accountable to VP-KM&SD through DG, RSDD.

CoPs can play a critical role in generating and sharing knowledge that enriches ADB's operations. Complementing sector and thematic committees, the typical CoP member may have more current and direct field experience to draw from than those at the director level and above. Their practical knowledge may be tapped as sources of information during preparation of country partnership strategies (CPS), project/program design, policy review, operational guidance, or as members of a workgroup or task force on crosscutting issues, e.g., members of energy and transport CoPs collaborating in the area of clean energy. To take advantage of their potential to strengthen ADB, new CoPs would be encouraged and supported as much as possible across diverse areas, not limited to ADB's priority sectors and themes.<sup>a</sup>

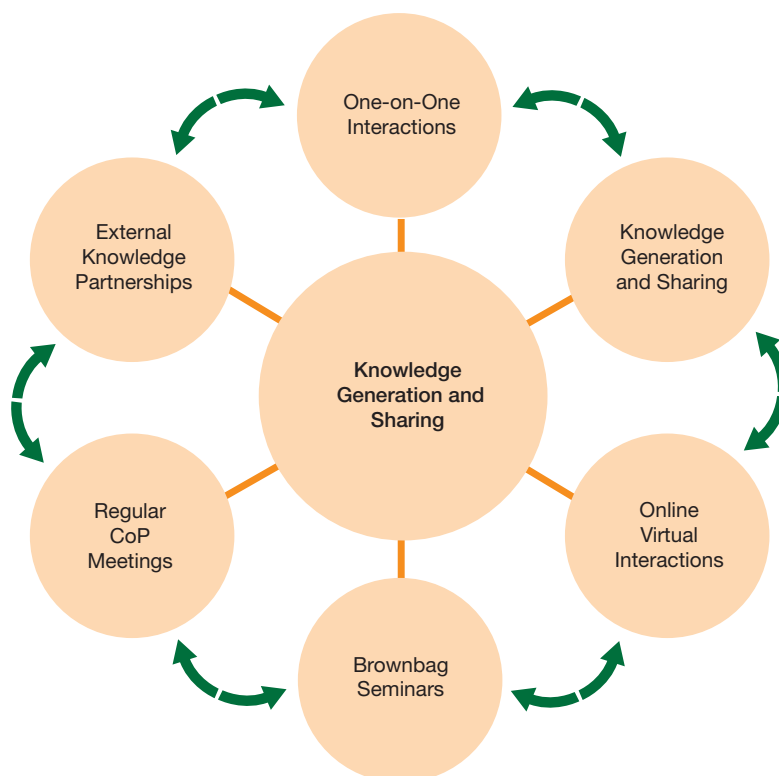
**Figure 1: Communities of Practice for Quality, Knowledge, and Innovation**



Source: Author.

<sup>a</sup> A CoP can be formed simply by sending an electronic mail to RSDD-KM indicating the title of the CoP, the name of the *community convenor*, and initial group members.



**Figure 2: Communities of Practice for Knowledge Generation and Sharing**

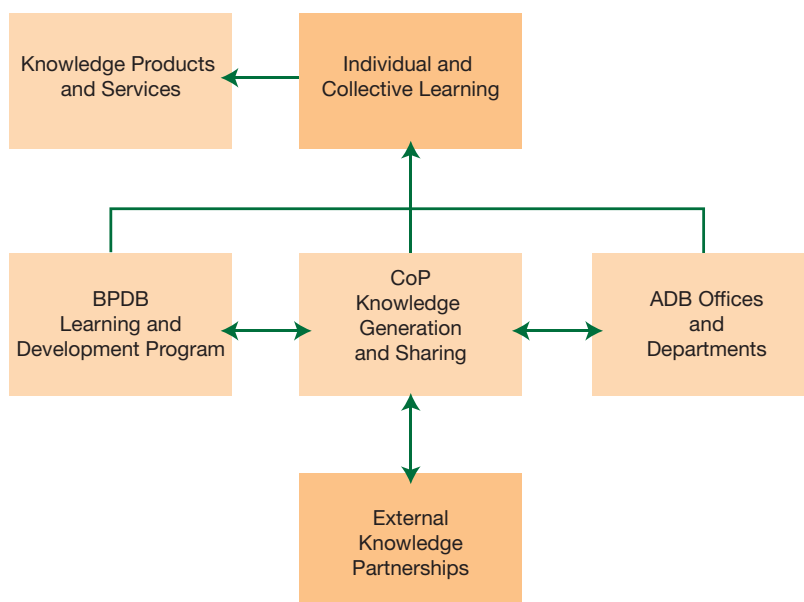
Source: Author.

The CoPs hosted by ADB would also help drive individual and collective learning and development to improve performance at both levels by providing an environment for continuous learning, solving common problems, pursuing joint solutions, and facilitating decision making. This environment includes activities to (i) produce and disseminate knowledge, information, and best practices; (ii) facilitate access to community resources, including the latest trends, developments, and innovations related to their areas of expertise; (iii) provide diverse avenues for interaction, dialogue, and collaboration between and among CoP members; and (iv) provide informal learning opportunities to help build the capacity and strengthen the skills of CoP members. The *community convenor* would be accountable to the members of a CoP and to ADB or external donors when a CoP receives grant, technical assistance, or project funds.

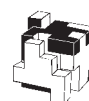
From experience to date, a strength of CoPs is likely to be the hosting of learning events, e.g., brownbags, talks, presentations, etc., in collaboration with other CoPs, regional departments, knowledge departments, and relevant offices and departments.

To ensure the relevance of topics and a high quality of content in learning events, CoPs would be consulted on events organized by offices and departments. All events would support interactive learning toward identified learning outcomes. This means that events would not only entail more than the delivery of a talk or presentation but would also involve specific learning processes that allow discussion on the relevance and applicability of the topic to staff work, issues, and concerns. If necessary, support to apply learning through follow-up activities would be made available. Good collaboration between CoPs and relevant departments would translate key learning into high-quality knowledge products and services that support *Strategy 2020*.

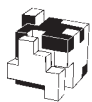
BPMSD and other departments would continue to support training. CoPs would work with the Staff Development and Benefits Division (BPDB) to develop specific learning and development programs, engage speakers, and address opportunities related to staff's professional development. CoPs and relevant departments would collaborate to translate learning into knowledge products and services.

**Figure 3: Communities of Practice for Individual and Collective Learning**

Source: Author.

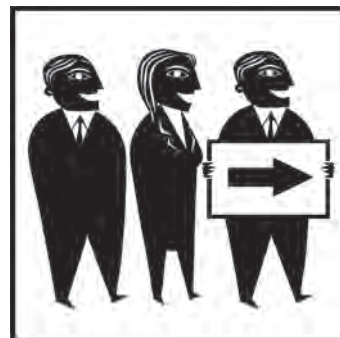
**COLLABORATION MECHANISMS**

When working with others, efforts sometimes turn out to be less than the sum of the parts. Too often, not enough attention is paid to facilitating effective collaborative practices.



# Informal Authority in the Workplace

In most types of organizations, formal authority is located at the top as part of an exchange against fairly explicit expectations. In networked, pluralistic organizations that must rapidly formulate adaptive solutions in an increasingly complex world, its power is eroding as its functions become less clear. In the 21st century, the requirements of organizational speed demand investments in informal authority.



## THE INSUFFICIENT RETURNS FROM FORMAL AUTHORITY IN ORGANIZATIONS

Formal authority—the power to influence or command thought, opinion, or behavior—is the defining characteristic of societal and organizational hierarchy.<sup>1</sup> Ideally, after Ronald Heifetz,<sup>2</sup> it is expected to serve five functions that most will agree are indispensable to social life. They are to (i) provide direction, (ii) offer protection, (iii) orientate roles, (iv) control conflict, and (v) maintain norms. Then again, in practice, there is a darker side to what formal authority can do on any given day: for instance, a boss can restrict a subordinate's actions, invalidate his or her decisions, or move for dismissal.

Charting a chain of command up a hierarchy, one will eventually locate someone (or some group) who administers the organization's collective decision rights (and enjoys the perquisites ascribed to the function). With power comes a set of resources with which to manage the holding environment of the organization and marshal attention. Yet, if formal authority resides at the top in most types of organizations to this day, it is located there as part of an exchange against overt expectations in a specific context.<sup>3</sup> Therefore, it can be taken away. Commonly, it is also lent on to lower-level managers according to the relevance and importance of their positions (with which special rights and privileges are in turn associated). Paradoxically, in all cases, managers can be made responsible

for getting things done but are not given the requisite authority—certainly not over their own bosses or peers.

Formal authority cuts less and less ice: in networked, pluralistic organizations that have no choice but to rapidly devise adaptive, not just technical,<sup>4</sup> solutions in a composite world, the power of formal authority is eroding as its utility becomes less clear. (As a result, many managers often feel they have traded their erstwhile, relative freedom against a chimera.) At the same time, since many organizations are discarding command-and-control hierarchies in favor of flatter management structures, and essential expertise and decision-making ability is ever more widely dispersed in organizations,<sup>5</sup> it is necessary to excel at persuasion to move people in the right direction and get work done through others under new conditions. Therefore, all things considered, formal authority is best understood as the potential for power, the total amount of which 21st century organizations should aim to expand by leveraging mutual influence among personnel.

**“I would rather try to persuade a man to go along, because once I have persuaded him, he will stick. If I scare him, he will stay just as long as he is scared, and then he is gone.”**

—Dwight Eisenhower

<sup>1</sup> Formal authority, in management, is the legitimate right, specified in job descriptions and terms of reference, that gives an individual the license and associated responsibilities to decide on behalf of an organization (or in the name of its sponsoring executive).

<sup>2</sup> Ronald Heifetz. 1994. *Leadership Without Easy Answers*. Harvard University Press.

<sup>3</sup> Typically, job descriptions and terms of reference are accompanied by stipulations of education and experience requirements and specifications of desired competencies. Reporting relationships are made clear, too.

<sup>4</sup> More often than not, individuals advance to managerial positions because of their track record in resolving technical problems, chiefly through individual contributions; however, meeting adaptive challenges also necessitates human and conceptual skills in the realm of social learning.

<sup>5</sup> Education levels have risen and information and communication technology make more knowledge accessible to many more than in the past. Moreover, creativity and innovation are now seen as central to organizational performance: management cannot be expected to be their sole source but must certainly manage for them.

**Table 1: The Myth and Reality of Formal Authority**

	Myth	Reality
<b>Operative Principle</b>	Authority	Interdependency
<b>Source of Power</b>	Formal authority	“Everything but ...”
<b>Key Players</b>	Subordinates	Includes those outside one’s formal authority
<b>Desired Outcomes</b>	Compliance	Need for identification and internalization
<b>Managerial Competencies</b>	Primarily technical	Technical, human, conceptual

Source: Adapted from Linda Hill. 2000. What It Really Means to Manage: Exercising Power and Influence. *Harvard Business School Note* No. 400-041. Harvard Business School.

## THE CHALLENGE OF NEW-AGE LEADERSHIP

Leadership is a process of social influence by which a person enlists the aid and support of others in accomplishing a common task. Having a positive leadership effect does not depend on formal authority; indeed, some of the best leadership comes from people who purposely eschew that. Conversely, many persons in positions of authority do not exercise leadership: to (endeavor to) fulfill the five basic social functions enumerated above, they navigate warily between Charybdis and Scylla, keen to avoid the troubles that arise when one asks people to confront problems; they are quite happy to simply preserve equilibrium. Extreme responses are to become overly directive or too collaborative.

Clearly then, there is a difference between what returns can be expected from formal authority on one side and from leadership on the other: hence, clarion calls for more informal authority in organizations. Unlike the former, which relies on conformity without acceptance,<sup>6</sup> the power of informal authority to influence attitudes and behaviors rests on admiration, credibility, respect, and trust, which conduce conformity coupled with acceptance. Notions of distributed leadership and management by persuasion appeal: by their means, organizations can become sophisticated and versatile, listening to and utilizing the expertise of many to intensify mutual influence and make vision real and central.

## DEFINING INFLUENCE

The record of mankind’s attempts to define (then refine) the principles of successful social influence is long.<sup>7</sup> In the sphere of interpersonal relationships, influence is having a vision of the optimum outcome for events or circumstances and then motivating people to work together to make the vision authentic.

Herbert Kelman has identified three broad varieties of social influence—namely, compliance, identification, and internalization—that represent three qualitatively different ways

**“Character may almost be called the most effective means of persuasion.”**

—Aristotle

of accepting influence. Paraphrasing, compliance takes place when an individual accepts influence because he or she hopes to achieve a favorable reaction from another person or group. That is, the individual adopts the induced attitude or behavior because he or she expects to gain specific rewards or approval and avoid specific punishments or disapproval by conforming. Identification occurs when an individual accepts influence because he or she wants to establish or maintain a satisfying self-defining relationship with another person or group. He or she adopts the induced behavior or attitude because it is associated with the desired relationship. Internalization happens when an individual accepts influence because the contents of the induced behavior or attitude—the ideas and actions that compose it—are intrinsically rewarding. He or she adopts it because of congruence with his or her value system. From a social psychology perspective, the determinants of conformity are normative<sup>8</sup> and informational.<sup>9</sup>

## ENTER THE LAW OF RECIPROCITY

In truth, irrespective of whether authority is formal or informal, the force that drives attitudes and behaviors, and therefore influence, is the near-universal belief that people should (in one form or another) be paid back for what they do, be that good or bad. Individuals and groups will respond to one another in similar ways: they will react to kindnesses and gifts with benevolence; conversely, they will respond to hurtful acts with some form of retaliation (or at least indifference). Their methods can be crude and mechanical, such as a literal executions of the principle of “an eye for an eye” (“tit for tat”); or they can be complex and sophisticated, e.g., one-to-one,

<sup>6</sup> Herbert Kelman. 1958. Compliance, Identification, and Internalization: Three Processes of Attitude Change. *Journal of Conflict Resolution*. 2 (1). pp. 51–60.

<sup>7</sup> Aristotle’s *Rhetoric* dates from the 4th century BC. It gives a working definition of rhetoric, namely, the ability, in each particular case, to see the available means of persuasion; investigates the three means of persuasion that an orator must draw on, that is, ethos, logos, and pathos; and introduces the elements of style (word choice, metaphor, and sentence structure) and arrangement (organization).

<sup>8</sup> Normative social influence happens when one conforms to be liked or accepted by the members of a group.

<sup>9</sup> Informational social influence takes place when one turns to the members of a group to obtain and accept information as evidence about reality.



**Table 2: Use and Abuse of Directive and Collaborative Leadership**

Directive	Too Directive	Collaborative	Too Collaborative
Leads personally. Is personally involved in solving his or her unit's problems.	Takes over. Does not give people enough rope.	Enables subordinates to lead. Is able to let go and give individuals the same latitude to do their jobs.	Empowers to a fault. Gives people too much rope.
Lets people know clearly and with feeling where he or she stands on issues. Declares himself or herself.	Other people do not speak out, are not heard.	Is interested in where other people stand on issues. Is receptive to their ideas.	People do not know where he or she stands.
Makes difficult calls including those with adverse effects on people.	Is insensitive, callous.	Is compassionate. Is responsive to people's needs and feelings.	Is overly accommodating. Is nice to people at expense of work.
Makes judgments. Zeros in on what is substandard or is not working in an individual's or unit's performance.	Is harshly judgmental. Dismisses the contributions of others. Is an unloving critic.	Shows appreciation. Makes other people feel good about their contributions. Helps people feel valued.	Gives false praise or praises indiscriminately. Is an uncritical fan.
Is competitive. Is highly motivated to excel and have his or her unit excel.	Is parochial, a partisan. Creates rivalries.	Is a team player. Helps other units or the larger organization perform well.	Sacrifices sharp focus on own unit. Does not argue for legitimate interests.
Has an intense can-do attitude. Expects everyone to do whatever it takes to get the job done.	Pushes too hard. Demands the impossible. Risks burnout.	Is realistic about limits on people's capacity to perform or produce.	Is too understanding. Does not expect enough.
Is confident. Gives people the feeling that he or she believes in self and his or her abilities.	Is arrogant. Fails to recognize or acknowledge others' talents.	Is modest. Is aware that he or she does not know everything and can be wrong.	Is self-effacing or down on self. Is too quick to discount own views.
Is persistent. Stays the course even in the face of adversity.	Sticks rigidly to a course of action, even in the face of strong evidence it is not working.	Is flexible. Is willing to change course if the plan does not seem to be working.	Is inconstant, changeable. Is too quick to change course.
Raises tough issues. Insists on working through to conclusion.	Forces issues when finesse would work better.	Fosters harmony. Contains conflict. Defuses tension.	Avoids or smooths over tense issues that need attention.

Source: Adapted from Robert Kaplan. 1999. The Dimensions of Forceful and Enabling Leadership: Virtues and Vices. *Leadership in Action*. 19 (4).

one-to-many, many-to-one, and generalized reciprocity. (Parallels exist in the animal world.)

Connection promotes collaborative intent and multiplies the chances of collaboration. Usefully, Allan Cohen and David Bradford<sup>10</sup> have framed an influence model based on reciprocity;<sup>11</sup> it brings the metaphor of currencies into play to describe the process of influence as exchange. They contend that effective managers attempt to build collaborative arrangements with potential allies, even when the latter seem at first adversaries, by discerning what currencies they might have to offer. (Sources of currencies are, broadly, organizationally, job-, and personally determined.) In other words, a manager

will exercise influence only in so far as he or she can offer something that others value. (The model need not be restricted to management; it applies to other walks of life, too.)

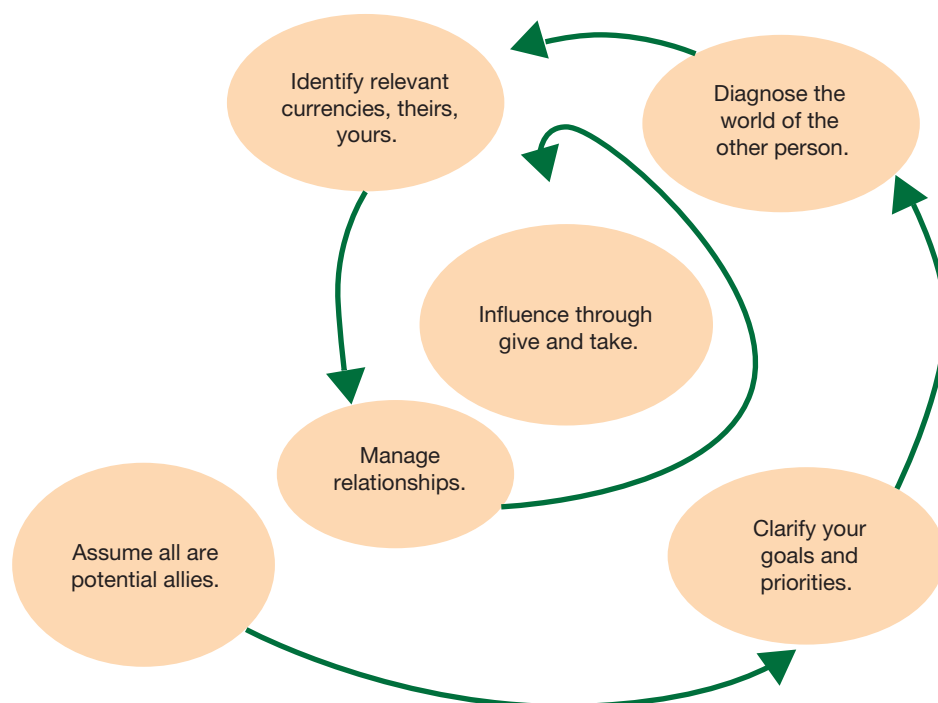
At least five types of currencies are at work in various organizational settings: (i) inspiration-related, (ii) task-related, (iii) position-related, (iv) relationship-related, and (v) person-related.<sup>12</sup> Many require no permission to spend, e.g., expressing gratitude, showing appreciation, paying respect, making the attainments of others visible, enhancing someone else's reputation, and extending one's personal help on tasks.<sup>13</sup> Unsurprisingly, the use of each is context-specific and hinges on the availability of capital. However, almost everyone has a

<sup>10</sup> Allan Cohen and David Bradford. 2005. The Influence Model: Using Reciprocity and Exchange to Get What You Need. *Journal of Organizational Excellence*. 25 (1). pp. 57–80.

<sup>11</sup> Robert Cialdini lists reciprocity—people repay in kind—as one of six principles of (ethical) persuasion. The others he cites are (i) consistency—people align with their clear commitments, (ii) social proof—people follow the lead of similar others, (iii) liking—people like those who like them, (iv) authority—people defer to experts, and (v) scarcity—people want more of what they can have less of. See Robert Cialdini. 1984. *Influence: The Psychology of Persuasion*. William Morrow and Company, Inc.

<sup>12</sup> One can also, by the same token, identify negative currencies. These come in two forms: (i) withholding payment of a known valuable currency, and (ii) using directly undesirable currencies. Common examples of the former include not giving recognition, not offering support, not providing challenge, and threatening to quit a particular situation. Directly undesirable currencies include raising one's voice, shouting, refusing to cooperate when asked, escalating issues to a common supervisor, going public with a contentious issue, making lack of cooperation visible, and attacking a person's reputation or integrity.

<sup>13</sup> We are, sages say, better defined by what we share than by what we own.

**Figure: The Cohen-Bradford Model of Influence Without Authority**

Source: Adapted from Allan Cohen and David Bradford. 2005. The Influence Model: Using Reciprocity and Exchange to Get What You Need. *Journal of Organizational Excellence*. 25 (1). pp. 57–80.

portfolio of currencies, and even though some are more highly valued than others, trade-offs are often possible—granting that some people may have such fundamental differences in what they hold dear that joint understanding is on occasion difficult to reach;<sup>14</sup> the key is to identify one’s resources relative to a potential ally’s wants without underestimating what one has to offer.

The Cohen–Bradford model of influence rests on a long-established feature of human nature as it relates to organizational context. (The recent breakthroughs of social neuroscience are fostering other comprehensive theories of the mechanisms that underlie human behavior.) At both individual and organizational levels, also in the case of formal

**“I don’t know the rules of grammar. If you’re trying to persuade people to do something, or buy something, it seems to me you should use their language.”**

—David Ogilvy

authority, and enriched or not by Robert Cialdini’s five other principles of persuasion, the model illuminates the necessary practice of persuading in the workplace. It does well to expose the fallacies of gratuitous guidelines for mastering the art of persuasion and the pseudo-scientific injunctions of persuasion campaigns.<sup>15</sup> ■

<sup>14</sup> This is more likely where societal cultural values and individual social beliefs conflict.

<sup>15</sup> An example of the former typically runs as follows: (i) connect emotionally, (ii) find the common ground, (iii) establish your credibility, and (iv) become an effective team builder. In the phases of change management campaigns, the persuasion process would typically ask change agents to (i) convince personnel that radical change is imperative and demonstrate why a new direction is the right one; (ii) position and frame the preliminary plan, gather feedback, and announce the final plan; (iii) manage the mood of personnel through constant communication; and (iv) reinforce behavioral guidelines to avoid backsliding.



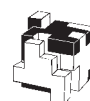
**Table 3: Currencies Frequently Used in Organizations**

Currency	Purchasing Power
<b>Inspiration-Related</b>	
Vision	Being involved in a task that has larger significant for the unit, office, division, or organization; clients, audiences, and partners; or society at large
Excellence	Having the opportunity to do important things very well
Moral and Ethical Correctness	Doing what is right by a "higher" standard than efficiency
<b>Task-Related</b>	
New Resources	Obtaining money, budget increases, personnel, space, etc.
Challenge and Learning	Being able to carry out tasks that strengthen skills and abilities
Assistance	Receiving help with existing projects or unwanted tasks
Organizational Support	Receiving overt or subtle backing or direct assistance with implementation
Rapid Response	Getting something more quickly
Information	Obtaining access to organizational or technical knowledge
<b>Position-Related</b>	
Recognition	Acknowledgment of effort, accomplishment, or abilities
Visibility	The chance to be known by higher-ups or significant others in the organization
Reputation	Being seen as competent, committed
"Insiderness" and Importance	A sense of centrality, of belonging
Contacts	Opportunities to link with others
<b>Relationship-Related</b>	
Acceptance and Inclusion	Feeling closeness and friendship
Understanding	Having concerns and issues listened to
Personal Support	Receiving personal and emotional backing
<b>Person-Related</b>	
Gratitude	Appreciation, expression of indebtedness
Ownership and Involvement	Ownership of and influence over important tasks
Self-concept	Affirmation of values, self-esteem, and identity
Comfort	Avoidance of hassles

Source: Adapted from Allan Cohen and David Bradford. 2005. The Influence Model: Using Reciprocity and Exchange to Get What You Need. *Journal of Organizational Excellence*. 25 (1). pp. 57–80.

## FURTHER READING

Allan Cohen and David Bradford. 1989. *Influence Without Authority*. John Wiley & Sons, Inc.



### COLLABORATION MECHANISMS

When working with others, efforts sometimes turn out to be less than the sum of the parts. Too often, not enough attention is paid to facilitating effective collaborative practices.





# Leading in the Workplace

Theories of leadership are divided: some underscore the primacy of personal qualities; others stress that systems are all-important. Both interpretations are correct: a larger pool of leaders is desirable all the time (and superleaders are necessary on occasion) but its development must be part of systemic invigoration of leadership in organizations.



## INTRODUCTION

Leadership is a complex and contested subject. But there is no doubt that the consequences of modernity throw up unprecedented challenges that beg better understanding of its nature in organizations.

More and more, contemporary discussions of leadership in organizations run thus:

**“Leadership is the key that unlocks (or blocks) performance and change. It is a social process—something that moves people. It is not what leaders do: it is what springs from purposeful relationships. Leadership does not depend on one person but on how groups act together to make collective sense of the situations they confront. From this perspective, leadership in organizations is the process by which individual and team contributions to a shared cause increase (at least) on a par with job-related psychological well-being.”**

— Author

## EARLY MODELS OF LEADERSHIP

Indeed. These days, leadership is more and more defined as the means of influence by which a person enlists the help of others to accomplish tasks of common interest. Of course, this

definition has not always held and the literature continues to frustrate: until about 20 years ago, the images associated with leadership were rooted in conflict, that is, moments of crisis or decision when the actions of an individual are pivotal.

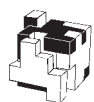
Early models of leadership—usually Western and borrowed from the military—were wont to examine the circumstances in which leaders emerge, and then search for psychological traits. The definite, often heroic endowments they identified typically embraced vision, ideological orientation, charisma, physical vitality and stamina, courage and resolution, intelligence and action-oriented judgment, decisiveness, self-confidence, assertiveness, a need for achievement, eagerness to accept responsibility, task competence, capacity to motivate people, understanding of followers and their needs, skill in dealing with people, trustworthiness, and adaptability.<sup>1</sup>

The archetypal qualities desired from leaders are undoubtedly opportune in dire circumstances. However, “old paradigm”

**“No institution can possibly survive if it needs geniuses or supermen to manage it. It must be organized in such a way as to be able to get along under a leadership composed of average human beings.”**

— Peter Drucker

<sup>1</sup> Only quite recently—that is, in the last 10 years—has attention been paid to social distance. What characterizes distant leaders, typically active in politics or the military, is usually quite different from what we identify in the nearby leaders we contact regularly. The latter are frequently perceived as intelligent, original, expert, dynamic, sociable, open, and considerate, for example. This distinction is crucial if we are to realize what is required in “normal” walks of life.



trait approaches<sup>2</sup> and notions of situational,<sup>3</sup> contingency,<sup>4</sup> transactional,<sup>5</sup> and even transformational<sup>6</sup> leadership—all of which smack of command and control more or less overtly—cannot serve the miscellany of organizations that need leadership in the workplace in the 21st century. Certainly, all over the world, “ordinary” people work with remarkable success in extraordinarily challenging circumstances yet do not advertise superhuman characteristics in their leadership styles.

## THE NEW CONTEXT FOR LEADERSHIP IN THE PUBLIC SECTOR

The challenges that organizations face in their efforts to perform owe to the rapid spread and connectedness of production, communication, and technologies across the world, and attendant changes in perceptions, expectations, opportunities, requirements, and workforces. In response, from the early 1990s, public sector organizations worldwide launched reforms inspired by President Clinton’s National Partnership for Reinventing Government, introduced in 1993.<sup>7</sup> They continue unabated to this day.

*Leading Change in the Public Sector*,<sup>8</sup> released by the Chartered Management Institute in 2003, gave a reality

check on the pressures from public reform agendas in the United Kingdom that is quite suggestive of what is still being experienced there as elsewhere.<sup>9</sup> Importantly, the research project also presented a sober assessment of what attributes and skills the survey respondents desired from their leaders and saw demonstrated. Table 1 reveals a clear perceived cultural shift in terms of the (then) new focus on delivery and working through partnerships. But Table 2 makes clear that resources and manpower levels were the greatest hindrance on reform. Clarity of vision was placed firmly at the top of the list of desired leadership attributes shown in Table 3, followed by integrity and sound judgment. Yet, the survey respondents reported that the top three qualities their most senior management team demonstrated instead were those of being knowledgeable, strategic, and committed to people. Table 4 reports that the three top desired public leadership skills were communication, engaging employees with a vision of the organization, and creating an enabling culture. But the gap was considerable in all three instances, notably regarding the third.

<sup>2</sup> Thankfully, perhaps, the seemingly innumerable traits that leaders are thought to exhibit (admitting also differences by sector) have since been pared into five dispositions: (i) self-confidence, (ii) empathy, (iii) ambition, (iv) curiosity, and (v) self-control. Many organizations still find uses for psychometric assessments inspired by trait approaches, for instance, by means of the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator, even though critiques suggest that such tests construct rather than discover traits, and might encourage surreptitious subordination of individuals to the professed needs of an organization.

<sup>3</sup> Situational approaches underscore the context in which leadership is exercised and emphasize that what is needed differs from situation to situation. At one extreme, proponents argue that context determines everything. At the other, they suggest that leaders are able to work in different ways depending on the state of affairs, i.e., adapt their style and patterns of behavior to suit circumstances based on (i) their position power, (ii) the structure of the task, and (iii) their relationship with followers. At heart, both interpretations belittle somewhat the role of followers, who are shepherded into more or less learned subordinate acceptance through a decision process that can range from autocratic to democratic. Under the directive leadership style, leaders take decisions for others and expect instructions to be followed. Under the participative leadership style, leaders share decision making with others and may encourage them to “buy into” the task, emphasizing the achievement of concrete objectives.

<sup>4</sup> Contingency approaches are skeptical that a leader can operate successfully in radically different situations. They suggest that leadership should change when the context changes or that the leader should change the context to ensure that his or her leadership style remains appropriate.

<sup>5</sup> Transactional approaches involve trading. They recognize what employees seek from work. They design incentives to accomplish a predetermined goal, make promises, and exchange rewards for aligned efforts. Power is given to the leader to correct and train subordinates when outcomes are not those desired. Transactional leaders are more common than other types of leaders.

<sup>6</sup> Transformational approaches are a variant of transactional approaches—some see them as a polar opposite—that aim to raise levels of awareness about the significance and value of designated outcomes and arrange ways to reach them, beyond self-interest, for the sake of the organization. Proponents claim that, unlike transactional approaches, transformational approaches are not based on “give and take” relationships but on the ability of leaders to redesign perceptions and values and change the expectations and aspirations of employees. The four elements of transformational leadership are (i) individual consideration (listening and attending to needs), (ii) intellectual stimulation (sharing cutting-edge information), (iii) inspirational motivation (framing a vision that appeals), and (iv) idealized influence (modeling the attitudes and behaviors one wants to see in others).

<sup>7</sup> The mission was to create a government that “works better, costs less, and gets results Americans care about.”

<sup>8</sup> Karen Charlesworth, Petra Cook, and Gene Crozier. 2003. *Leading Change in the Public Sector: Making the Difference*. Chartered Management Institute.

<sup>9</sup> The research project surveyed almost 1,900 public sector managers—mostly at the middle and junior levels—in central government, local government, health, education, the armed forces, the fire service, and the police.

**Table 1: Perceived Change in Culture and Values** (% , net change over past 3 years)

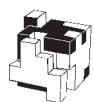
Base: 1,890 respondents	All	Central Government	Local Government	Health	Education	Forces
Focus on delivery targets	+87	+85	+93	+88	+83	+79
Forming relationships with strategic partners	+77	+76	+87	+75	+75	+64
Accountability	+72	+64	+68	+78	+70	+78
Responsiveness to clients	+64	+72	+75	+72	+62	+40
Working for the public good	+53	+58	+64	+59	+35	+42
Public involvement in service design and delivery	+51	+43	+73	+45	+65	+37
Improved client satisfaction	+50	+55	+58	+54	+49	+33
Ethics and integrity	+39	+34	+35	+37	+20	+56
Influence and involvement of elected authority members	+27	+19	+43	+30	+18	+8
Employee satisfaction and motivation	-3	-2	-8	+2	-15	+10

Source: Karen Charlesworth, Petra Cook, and Gene Crozier. 2003. *Leading Change in the Public Sector: Making the Difference*. Chartered Management Institute.

**Table 2: Greatest Challenges Currently Facing Public Sector Managers (%)**

Base: 1,890 respondents	All	Central Government	Local Government	Health	Education	Forces
Resources and manpower levels	63	55	64	64	51	79
Work-life balance	43	45	40	42	47	51
Increased job responsibilities	40	37	36	44	41	43
Outcomes rather than inputs focus	35	38	39	35	30	27
Statutory inspection regimes	28	11	36	24	46	16
Level of support from above	23	25	20	23	24	24
Career uncertainty	21	30	18	24	16	22
Managing innovation and creativity	18	21	20	20	16	14
Personal growth and development	14	21	8	15	13	15
Delivering services online	9	14	13	4	8	4

Source: Karen Charlesworth, Petra Cook, and Gene Crozier. 2003. *Leading Change in the Public Sector: Making the Difference*. Chartered Management Institute.



**Table 3: Key Leadership Attributes Desired and Demonstrated at Different Organizational Levels (%)**

Base: 1,890 respondents	Desired Attributes of Public Sector Leaders	Demonstrated by Own Most Senior Management Team	Demonstrated by Own Line Manager
Clarity of vision	66	35	28
Integrity	52	34	39
Sound judgment	50	25	33
Commitment to people development	49	36	39
Strategic	46	40	23
Decisiveness	39	29	31
Strong values	26	26	26
Knowledgeable	25	44	41
Creative and innovative	20	14	15
Inspiration	18	8	10
Energy	14	23	27
Passion	9	10	10
Resilience	9	24	21
Humility	6	4	11

Source: Karen Charlesworth, Petra Cook, and Gene Crozier. 2003. *Leading Change in the Public Sector: Making the Difference*. Chartered Management Institute.

**Table 4: Key Skills that Public Sector Leaders Should Possess**

Base: 1,890 respondents	Desired Skills of Public Sector Leaders	Demonstrated by Own Most Senior Management Team	Demonstrated by Own Line Manager
Communication, including listening, skills	63	35	51
Engaging employees with the vision of the organization	62	35	31
Creating an enabling culture	60	27	34
Formulating and implementing strategy	48	44	30
Working effectively in partnership with the wider community	48	34	22
Leading change initiatives	43	36	36

*continued on next page*

Table 4 continued

Base: 1,890 respondents	Desired Skills of Public Sector Leaders	Demonstrated by Own Most Senior Management Team	Demonstrated by Own Line Manager
Team building	31	21	40
Developing customer service strategy	24	31	22
Developing strong political relationships	23	33	20
Leading the innovation process	20	14	16
Exploiting the potential of new technologies	18	23	18
Managing contracts and procurement projects	6	23	16

Source: Karen Charlesworth, Petra Cook, and Gene Crozier. 2003. *Leading Change in the Public Sector: Making the Difference*. Chartered Management Institute.

## WHERE TO FROM THERE?

Recent developments in theory and practice have emphasized the growing complexity of leadership. Organizations are not machines and should not be treated as such. Since they are communities (of communities), we should want them to share the flexible, resilient, and adaptive attributes that characterize living systems. Learning organizations,<sup>10</sup> much as living systems, are able to self-organize, sustain themselves, and move toward greater complexity and order when needed. They can respond intelligently to the imperatives of change without awaiting directives from the outside.

Despite the abundance of trust, however, the learning organization is not necessarily a comfortable place for conventional leaders: much of the power resides at the edges of these organizations, and imposed authority (even when subtly disguised) no longer really works—rather, it must be earned. A learning culture is born of beliefs, values, and principles that are shared by people who are committed to one another and to a common goal.<sup>11</sup> Therefore, running it requires a powerful theory: many suggest that this should be founded on questions, ideas, tests, and reflections in a wheel of learning.

Still, keeping the wheel of learning in motion—without it stalling for too long in one quadrant—is no easy matter. In 21st century organizations, certainly in the public sector, that and not much else may then be considered to be the primary task of a leader and his community of servant-leaders.<sup>12</sup> Each will find different ways of carrying it out, based on the mission

of the organization, the distinctive context in which it operates, and the leadership attributes and skills that these demand—preferably to foster vision, give constant encouragement, and put on view personal examples. But all will ensure as they do so that the constituent members of the organization become and remain “change agile.” In an uncertain world, high-performance organizations will be those that continuously renew, reinvent, and reinvigorate themselves.<sup>13</sup> To these intents, they will wisely identify, engage, and develop individuals who possess the “learning habit” and delight in the unknown. They will invest immensely in them and trust them in equal proportions. Leadership will be collective, irrespective of hierarchical position or authority: true leaders will be those who build the organization and its capabilities. ■

**“The leader is best when people are hardly aware of his existence, not so good when people praise his government, less good when people stand in fear, worst when people are contemptuous. Fail to honor people and they will fail to honor you. But of a good leader who speaks little when his work is done, his aim fulfilled, the people say: ‘We did it ourselves.’”**

—Lao Tzu

<sup>10</sup> *Learning for Change in ADB* broadly defines a learning organization as a collective undertaking, rooted in action, that builds and improves its own practice by consciously and continually devising and developing the means to draw learning from its own (and others’) experience. See ADB. 2009. *Learning for Change in ADB*. Manila. Available: [www.adb.org/documents/books/learning-for-change/default.asp](http://www.adb.org/documents/books/learning-for-change/default.asp)

<sup>11</sup> Such organizations might more appropriately be envisioned as communities of commitment, and certainly not as organizations of command and control.

<sup>12</sup> Servant-leaders are seen as humble stewards of their organization’s resources. Servant leadership is a philosophy and practice of leadership, coined and defined by Robert Greenleaf. The general concept is ancient, with roots in the People’s Republic of China (Lao Tzu) and India (Chanakya). Servant-leaders, said Greenleaf, constantly inquire whether the highest priority needs of others are being served. Do those served grow as persons? Do they, while being served, become healthier, wiser, freer, more autonomous, and more likely themselves to become servants?

<sup>13</sup> Inevitably, heeding Peter Drucker, each will recurrently ask itself: What is our mission? Who are our clients? What do our clients value? What are our results? What is our plan? These five simple—yet complex and compelling—questions are as essential and relevant today as they were yesterday and will be tomorrow.

**Table 5: Toward Systemic Invigoration of Leadership**

From	To
Self-Isolating Individual Leaders	Self-Supporting Leadership Teams
Individual Leaders	Leadership Institutions
Cult Control	Cultural Coherence
Rules	Principles
Naiveté	Complexity
Similarity	Diversity
Private Interest	Public Service
Inherited Traits and Acquired Skills	Developed Will
Win-Lose Arguments	Win-Win Negotiations

Source: Developed from Cabinet Office. 2001. *Strengthening Leadership in the Public Sector*. HMSO: London.

## FURTHER READING

Robert Greenleaf. 1977. *Servant Leadership: A Journey into the Nature of Legitimate Power and Greatness*. Paulist Press.



### COLLABORATION MECHANISMS

When working with others, efforts sometimes turn out to be less than the sum of the parts. Too often, not enough attention is paid to facilitating effective collaborative practices.



# Learning in Strategic Alliances

Strategic alliances that bring organizations together promise unique opportunities for partners. The reality is often otherwise. Successful strategic alliances manage the partnership, not just the agreement, for collaborative advantage. Above all, they also pay attention to learning priorities in alliance evolution.



## PREAMBLE

The resource-based view of the firm that gained currency in the mid-1980s considered that the competitive advantage of an organization rests on the application of the strategic resources<sup>1</sup> at its disposal. These days, orthodoxy recognizes the merits of the dynamic, knowledge-based capabilities<sup>2</sup> underpinning the positions organizations occupy in a sector or market.

Strategic alliances—meaning cooperative agreements between two or more organizations—are a means to enhance strategic resources: self-sufficiency is becoming increasingly difficult in a complex, uncertain, and discontinuous external environment that calls for focus and flexibility in equal measure. Everywhere, organizations are discovering that they cannot “go” it alone and must now often turn to others to survive.<sup>3</sup>

## DEFINITION

A strategic alliance is a voluntary, formal arrangement between two or more parties to pool resources to achieve a common set of objectives that meet critical needs while remaining independent entities. Strategic alliances involve exchange, sharing, or codevelopment of products, services, procedures,

and processes. To these ends, strategic alliances can—in fact, frequently do—call on contributions of organization-specific resources and capabilities (that may involve trade-offs in capital, control, and time). The generic motive, to a greater extent than in the 1990s, is to sustain long-term competitive advantage in a fast-changing world, for example, by reducing costs through economies of scale or more knowledge, boosting research and development efforts, increasing access to new technology, entering new markets, breathing life into slowing or stagnant markets, reducing cycle times, improving quality, or

**“The greatest change in corporate culture—and in the way business is being conducted—may be the accelerating growth of relationships based not on ownership but on partnership; joint ventures; minority investments cementing a joint marketing agreement or an agreement to do joint research ... alliances of all sorts.”**

—Peter Drucker

<sup>1</sup> The resources that the theory deemed of strategic importance were valuable, rare, inimitable, and non-substitutable (leading to charges of tautology). Importantly, the list of what constitutes a resource was expanded in the 1990s with the refinement that the encompassing construct previously called resources should be segregated into resources and capabilities.

<sup>2</sup> Dynamic capability is an organization's ability to integrate, build, and reconfigure internal and external competencies to address rapidly changing environments.

<sup>3</sup> In the 21st century, the challenges go beyond facing global competition, meeting client expectations or demands for integrated solutions to their needs, adjusting to shortened product life cycles, coping with increased specialization of skills and capabilities, or adapting to the internet and anytime/anywhere communication technologies, to name five worldwide phenomena. They have to do with the business models that underpin operations in both the private and public sectors, and which now encounter severe social and environmental limits. Henceforth, organizations must proactively work with others to achieve system changes. (In the 1970s, the driver of strategic alliances was the product and its performance: alliances aimed to procure the best raw materials at the lowest prices, deploy the latest technology, and stretch market penetration across borders. In the 1980s, the motive was to strengthen positions in the sector or market of activity, using alliances to develop economies of scale and of scope. In the 1990s, the lifting of barriers to market entry and the opening of borders between sectors brought a focus on capabilities: it was no longer enough to defend one's position—to stay ahead of the competition, innovations that give recurrent competitive advantage had become *de rigueur*.)





inhibiting competitors.<sup>4</sup> (Yves Doz and Gary Hamel<sup>5</sup> grouped the primary purposes of an alliance into three: co-option, co-specialization, and learning and internalization.)

## TYPES OF ALLIANCES

Strategic alliances between organizations are now ubiquitous.<sup>6</sup> Depending on the objectives or structure of the alliance, they take various configurations along a continuum of cooperative arrangements, e.g., cartels, cooperatives, joint ventures, equity investments, licensing, subcontracting (outsourcing), franchising, distribution relationships, research and development consortiums, industrial standards groups, action sets, innovation networks, clusters, letters of intent, memorandums of understanding, partnership frameworks, etc.<sup>7</sup> Some are short-lived; others are the prelude to a merger. In the public sector, from the 1990s, the formation of partnerships began to sweep through policies, strategies, programs, and projects, including their design, implementation, results, and associated business processes.

## CONVENTIONAL APPROACHES TO STRATEGIC ALLIANCES ...

The usual steps to forming a strategic alliance, each the subject of learned texts, are<sup>8</sup>

1. Locate and validate the alliance within the long-term vision, mission, and strategy of the organization.
2. Specify the objectives and scope of the alliance regarding the organization-specific resources and capabilities that are desired, and underscore the importance of these.<sup>9</sup>
3. Question what to offer and what to receive in exchange to highlight interdependence. (Alternatively, what must be retained internally for strategic purposes, what cannot be done internally, and what could be done externally.)

4. Evaluate and select potential partners based on the level of synergy and the ability of the organizations to work together.<sup>10</sup>
5. Identify and mutually recognize the opportunities, including the transparency and receptivity of information they call for.
6. Evaluate negotiation capabilities.
7. Understand joint task requirements and develop and propose a working interface with the prospective partner. (This might necessitate an evaluation of the impact on shareholders and stakeholders.)
8. Negotiate and implement an agreement, anticipating longevity, that defines progress and includes systems to monitor and evaluate performance (while eschewing performance myopia).
9. Define the governance system that will oversee the alliance, enforce its administration, build trust and reciprocity, and curtail opportunistic behavior.
10. Plan the integration and its points of contacts.<sup>11</sup>
11. Create the alliance and catalyze it with leadership commitment.
12. Manage for value identification, creation, storage, sharing, and usage over time, while assessing the alliance's interdependence with other relationships.<sup>12</sup>

## ... AND THEIR SHORTCOMINGS

However, strategic alliances and the proverbial win-win situations they promise frequently meet with difficulties (that can result in the termination of the alliance). Typical factors include poor communications, incompatible objectives, inability to share risks, opportunism, (perceived) low performance and flexibility, control and ownership arrangements, lack of trust, and conflict. These rifle across the decision to form an alliance,

<sup>4</sup> Several interlinked trends, many of them already dominant, will accelerate the formation of strategic alliances in the near future. They include developments in telecommunications; the convergence of technologies; product, service, and organizational (procedural or process) innovations; decreasing costs in research and development; further shortening of product life cycles; the efforts of governments to attract foreign capital and technologies (sometimes, as in the case of the People's Republic of China, by giving select key investors privileged access); and the growing permeability of borders between sectors and markets, often on account of deregulation and privatization.

<sup>5</sup> Yves Doz and Gary Hamel. 1998. *Alliance Advantage: The Art of Creating Value Through Partnering*. Harvard Business School Press.

<sup>6</sup> Strategic alliances can be struck with a wide variety of players: customers, suppliers, competitors, universities, research institutes, government agencies, nongovernment organizations, etc. Partners may continue to compete elsewhere; some even argue that collaboration in strategic alliances is tantamount to competition in a different form.

<sup>7</sup> The last form of strategic alliance is notably popular in academia, government, and development agencies. A memorandum of understanding describes a bilateral or multilateral agreement. It expresses a convergence of will between parties and records an intended common line of action. It is a more formal alternative to a gentlemen's agreement (but this, by no means, curtails opportunistic behavior). It is used most often where parties do not imply a legal commitment or in situations where the parties cannot draft a legally binding agreement. (In some cases, depending on the wording, memorandums of understanding can have the enforceable power of a contract.) In development agencies, for instance, shared objectives might, for example, include working together to assist developing countries reduce poverty, achieve sustainable development, and realize the United Nations Millennium Development Goals; ensuring the delivery of development assistance in line with the principles of the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness and the Accra Agenda for Action; and building public awareness of the outcomes of the partnership. Sharing of information is usually central to such joint undertakings.

<sup>8</sup> Succinctly, Steve Steinhilber identifies three essential building blocks that strategic alliances should set: (i) the right framework, (ii) the right organization, and (iii) the right relationships. See Steve Steinhilber. 2008. *Strategic Alliances: Three Ways to Make Them Work*. Harvard Business School Press.

<sup>9</sup> The key questions are: What are the intended uses of the desired resources and capabilities? When would these be used? How would they be used?

<sup>10</sup> The key elements relate to sector and market; products, services, procedures, and processes; culture; compatibility; commitment; and financial positions.

<sup>11</sup> The key questions are: What would be, for instance, the training, equipment, maintenance, and awareness-raising implications of participating in the alliance? Would there be additional requirements? Would financial obligations need to be contemplated?

<sup>12</sup> Alliances should not be viewed in a vacuum: they are elements of strategic portfolios of evolving inter-organizational relationships. Each alliance is embedded in an organizational context that constrains certain developments but enables others in a coevolutionary way.

the selection of the partner, the choice of the governance structure for the alliance, the dynamic evolution of the alliance as the partnership spans time, the performance of the alliance, and the consequences for the partners.<sup>13</sup>

## ASTARTERKITFORSTRATEGICALLIANCES

Because conventional advice such as that given above has (when followed) still not sufficiently made up for the shortcomings of strategic alliances, Jonathan Hughes and Jeff Weiss<sup>14</sup> have proposed simple tenets to help the latter work better. The rules are to (i) focus less on defining the business plan and more on how the partners will work together; (ii) develop metrics pegged not only to alliance goals but also to alliance progress; (iii) leverage differences to create value, rather than attempt to eliminate them; (iv) go beyond formal governance structures to encourage collaborative behavior; and (v) spend as much time on managing internal stakeholders as on managing the relationship with the partner.

## PROMISE, REALITY, AND PROMISE: LEARNING IN STRATEGICAL LIANCES

Notwithstanding, time and again, a subtler but far more important rationale behind strategic alliances (even those aimed at co-option or co-specialization) is obscured by their explicit

strategic motives. That rationale is the intent to learn—especially knowledge that is tacit,<sup>15</sup> collective, and imbedded: and it is probably failure in this arena that explains shortcomings.<sup>16</sup>

In brief, strategic alliances open up opportunities for organizations to gain knowledge and leverage strengths with partners.<sup>17</sup> (Indeed, the ability to learn through alliances is often vital to their continued existence.) Building knowledge- and identification-based trust, not just calculus-based trust, is fundamental to this. But strategic alliances also evolve as partners learn (or fail to learn). As competencies change, their goals are redefined. And the potential for learning also changes. However, even though alliance knowledge is tacitly or explicitly deemed useful, organizations will not necessarily actively seek to acquire it. Learning is a difficult, frustrating, and often misunderstood process.

With exceptions, studies of strategic alliances have focused on initial conditions and ignored the dynamic and interactive learning dimensions of strategic alliances.<sup>18</sup> Yves Doz<sup>19</sup> has explored five areas for learning as strategic alliances evolve in phases: (i) environment, (ii) task, (iii) process, (iv) skills, and (v) goals.<sup>20</sup> Central to each phase are systems, mechanisms, processes, and behaviors that build and improve practice in ongoing fashion by consciously and continually devising and developing the means to draw learning and translate that into

**Table 1: Simple Rules to Make Strategic Alliances Work Better**

From	To
Defining the right business arrangement	Developing the right working relationships
Creating ends metrics	Creating means metrics
Eliminating differences	Embracing differences
Establishing formal alliance management systems structures	Enabling collaborative behavior
Managing the external relationship with partners	Managing your own internal stakeholders

Source: Jonathan Hughes and Jeff Weiss. 2007. Simple Rules for Making Alliances Work. *Harvard Business Review*. November. pp. 122–131.

<sup>13</sup> Partners may not have the same ability to learn from an alliance and knowledge-related asymmetries will influence respective performances. And yet, learning from partners is of the essence of strategic alliances.

<sup>14</sup> See Jonathan Hughes and Jeff Weiss. 2007. Simple Rules for Making Alliances Work. *Harvard Business Review*. November. pp. 122–131.

<sup>15</sup> Tacit knowledge is the personalized knowledge that people carry in their heads. It is more difficult to formalize and communicate than explicit knowledge, but can be shared through discussion, storytelling, and personal interactions. There are two dimensions to tacit knowledge: (i) a technical dimension, which encompasses the kind of informal personal skills or crafts often referred to as know-how; and (ii) a cognitive dimension, which consists of beliefs, ideals, values, schemata, and mental models that are ingrained in individuals and often taken for granted.

<sup>16</sup> The formation of a strategic alliance is the acknowledgment that a partner has useful knowledge. If it had none, there would be no reason to form the alliance.

<sup>17</sup> Organizations do not have brains but they have cognitive systems and memories.

<sup>18</sup> Over the years, strategic alliances have been analyzed from the perspectives of transaction cost economics, game theory, bargaining theory, and resource dependence theory. The social exchange perspective is a recent addition: it explores the circumstances and requirements leading to identification-based trust and the associated belief that an organization will behave with good intentions toward the alliance and its partner.

<sup>19</sup> Yves Doz. 1996. The Evolution of Cooperation in Strategic Alliances: Initial Conditions or Learning Processes. *Strategic Management Journal*. 17. pp. 55–83.

<sup>20</sup> The environment is both external (e.g., sectors, markets, competition, government, society, culture, etc.) and internal (e.g., the strategic context within each partner operates). The tasks are the (inter)actions, at multiple levels, that the partners must share and perform successfully. The processes encompass the decisions, operations, and associated business processes needed to successfully meet the tasks of the alliance. The skills are the more tacit, collective, and imbedded abilities and related knowledge, germane to the alliance, that must be transferred for the purposes of the alliance. The goals are the motives and agendas that partners bring to the alliance.



evolving action for mutual benefit. Successful strategic alliances are highly evolutionary and grow in interactive cycles of learning, reevaluation, and readjustment. They do so at different levels, e.g., individual, group, and organization. Such are the attributes of learning organizations.<sup>21</sup>

## ENHANCING LEARNING EFFECTIVENESS IN STRATEGIC ALLIANCES

Knowledge can only be acquired if it is accessible. But accessibility, though necessary, does not guarantee learning; learning effectiveness is primordial. Much as in the case of

individuals, the capacity of organizations to learn may be constrained for miscellaneous reasons. (Absorptive capacity is the ability to recognize the value of new knowledge and to assimilate it.)

Andrew Inkpen<sup>22</sup> identified three integrative dimensions of maximum joint learning that influence learning effectiveness in strategic alliances: (i) the intensity of knowledge connections between partners, which occur through both formal and informal relationships between individuals and groups; (ii) the relatedness of alliance knowledge, nourished by knowledge of the partner and knowledge about alliance management; and

**Table 2: Learning Priorities in Alliance Evolution**

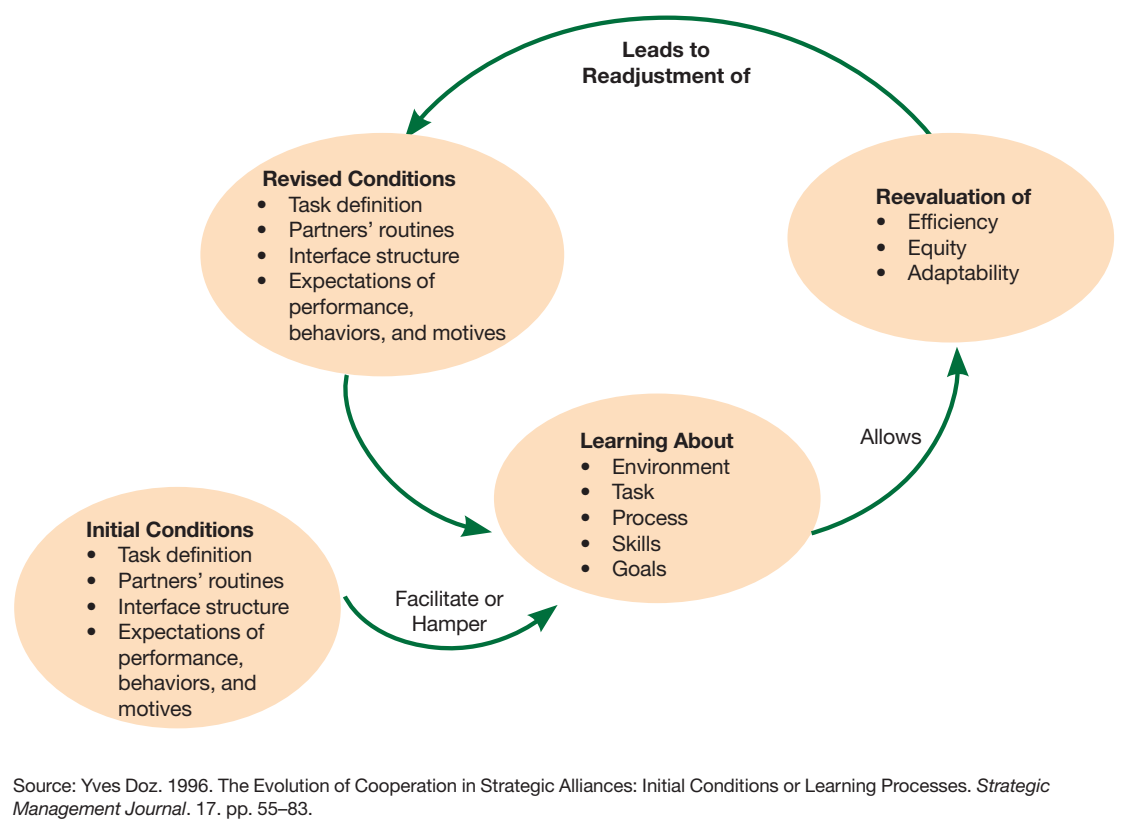
Learning Dimension	Awareness and Partner Selection	Exploration	Expansion	Commitment to Relationship
Environment	External context, including national and cultural contexts	External and internal contexts, including the partner's corporate culture and management practices	External context, for new opportunities	External context, mutually, for new opportunities
Tasks	Very little, if any	Initiation of understanding and establishment of common tasks	Ability to establish common tasks	Ability to revise and reset effective common tasks
Processes	Very little, if any	Initiation of streamlined processes for performance of common tasks	Ability to establish joint processes and perform common tasks	Learning to revise and reset joint processes to perform effective common tasks
Skills	Explicit knowledge about potential partner skills	Initiation of transfer of implicit skill knowledge in later phases of the alliance	Transfer of implicit skill knowledge	New skill knowledge development and acquisition for mutual benefit
Goals	Strategic intentions and initial goals of potential partners	Partner goals, seeking to establish compatible and common goals	Learning to set alliance goals	Ability to continuously evaluate, revise, and reset alliance goals for durable competitive advantage
Unilateral Learning		Mostly Unilateral, with Elements of Mutual Learning	Both Unilateral and Mutual Learning	Predominantly Mutual Learning

Note: Phase 1 involves recognition by an organization of another as a feasible alliance partner. Phase 2 covers a search and trial period during which the purpose of the partnership is established. Phase 3 is the stage at which partners increase mutual interdependence and grow the benefits that accrue to both. Phase 4 sees mutual pledges to the maintenance of the alliance and continued interdependence. The primary factors that will condition progress in each phase are (i) the degree of protection that partners give to their knowledge, (ii) the climate of trust between partners, (iii) the tacitness of knowledge, and (iv) the existence of previous ties between partners.

Source: Adapted from Karthik Iyer. 2002. Learning in Strategic Alliances: An Evolutionary Perspective. *Academy of Marketing Science Review*. 6 (5).

<sup>21</sup> Organizational learning occurs when an organization acquires, assimilates, and applies new information, knowledge, and skills that improve its long-run performance and augment its competitive advantage. In a strategic alliance, the behavioral and organizational characteristics of each partner will condition success. Important behavioral characteristics include commitment, coordination, interdependence, and trust; communications; and conflict-resolution techniques. Crucial organizational attributes relate to structure (e.g., formalization, centralization, and complexity) and control (e.g., focus, mechanisms, and extent).

<sup>22</sup> Andrew Inkpen. 1998. Learning and Knowledge Acquisition Through International Strategic Alliances. *The Academy of Management Executive*. 12 (4). pp. 69–80.

**Figure: Simplified Process of Alliance Evolution**

**“ We cannot always assure the future of our friends;  
we have a better chance of assuring our future if we  
remember who our friends are. ”**

— Henry Kissinger

(iii) the cultural alignment between alliance managers and their respective organizations. He flagged six objectives that, if met, should enhance learning effectiveness. And, he matched each with a series of questions to stimulate managerial thought and action.

## MOREOVER

Summing up, the success of strategic alliances can be variously attributed to the fit between partners, openness to change, the embedment of alliance management capabilities into the fabric of partner cultures, the strong involvement of leadership and,

above all, alliance learning. The failure of strategic alliances has, somewhat simplistically, been ascribed to a failure to collaborate—a convenient turn of phrase that explains much away.

If, however, learning in alliances can do much to promote success, then it should be predominantly mutual. In this respect, one last barrier must be overcome: asymmetries between firms do exist which, of course, explains why they partner in the first place.<sup>23</sup> But if resolving variegated differences will serve alliances well, it follows that knowledge-related asymmetries should be tackled, too.

Knowledge-related asymmetries fall naturally in three categories: (i) information, (ii) knowledge, and (iii) learning. Each will have a different effect on the individual performance of partners, the realization of objectives, and the stability of the alliance. The least that partners can do is to be conscious of that. ■

<sup>23</sup> Asymmetries can be eclectic, strategic, competitive, power-related, or network-based.

**Table 3: Key Issues in Alliance Learning**

Objective	Question
Assess and value partner knowledge.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What were the strategic objectives in forming the alliance?</li> <li>• What are the core competencies of our alliance partner?</li> <li>• Which partner contributes key alliance inputs?</li> <li>• What specific knowledge does the partner have that could enhance our competitive strategy? Is that knowledge or some of the knowledge embodied in the alliance?</li> <li>• What are the core partner skills relevant for our products and markets?</li> <li>• Are we realistic about partner skills and capabilities relevant to our strategy and capabilities?</li> </ul>
Determine knowledge accessibility.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have learning issues been discussed in the alliance negotiations?</li> <li>• How have key alliance responsibilities been allocated to the partners? Which partner controls key managerial responsibilities?</li> <li>• Do we have easy geographic access to the alliance operations?</li> <li>• Does the alliance agreement specify restrictions on our access to the alliance operations?</li> <li>• Has our partner taken explicit steps to restrict our access? If yes, can we eliminate these restrictions through negotiation or assignment of managers to the alliance?</li> </ul>
Evaluate knowledge tacitness and ease of transfer.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is our learning objective focused on explicit operational knowledge?</li> <li>• Where in the alliance does the knowledge reside?</li> <li>• Is the knowledge strategic or operational?</li> <li>• Reality check: do we understand what we are trying to learn and how we can use the knowledge?</li> </ul>
Establish knowledge connections between the alliance and the partners.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do parent managers visit the alliance regularly?</li> <li>• Has a systematic plan been established for managers to rotate between the alliance and the parent?</li> <li>• Are parent managers in regular contact with senior alliance managers?</li> <li>• Has the alliance been incorporated into parent strategic plans and do alliance managers participate in parent strategic planning discussions?</li> <li>• What is the level of trust between parent and alliance managers?</li> <li>• Do alliance financial issues dominate meetings between alliance and parent managers?</li> </ul>
Draw on existing knowledge to facilitate learning.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have the partner organizations worked together in the past?</li> <li>• In the learning process, have efforts been made to involve managers with prior experience in alliance management and partner ties?</li> <li>• Are experiences with other alliances being used as the basis for managing the current alliance?</li> <li>• Are we realistic about our partner's learning objectives?</li> <li>• Are we open-minded about knowledge without immediate short-term applicability?</li> </ul>
Ensure that partner and alliance managerial cultures are aligned.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is the alliance viewed as a threat or an asset by parent managers?</li> <li>• In the parent, is there agreement on the strategic rationale for the alliance?</li> <li>• In the alliance, do managers understand the importance of the parent's learning objective?</li> </ul>

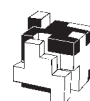
Source: Andrew Inkpen. 1998. Learning and Knowledge Acquisition Through International Strategic Alliances. *The Academy of Management Executive*. 12 (4). pp. 69–80.

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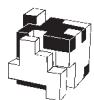
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## COLLABORATION MECHANISMS

When working with others, efforts sometimes turn out to be less than the sum of the parts. Too often, not enough attention is paid to facilitating effective collaborative practices.



# Managing Virtual Teams

Virtual team management is the ability to organize and coordinate with effect a group whose members are not in the same location or time zone, and may not even work for the organization. The predictor of success is—as always—clarity of purpose. But group participation in achieving that is more than ever important to compensate for lost context. Virtual team management requires deeper understanding of people, process, and technology, and recognition that trust is a more limiting factor compared with face-to-face interactions.



## BACKGROUND

A team is a cooperative unit of interacting individuals who are committed to a common purpose on tasks; endowed with complementary skills, for instance, in technical competence, problem-solving ability, and emotional intelligence; and who share interdependent performance goals (with indicators and deadlines), as well as an approach to work for which they hold themselves mutually accountable.<sup>1</sup> (People try to accomplish with others what they cannot do alone.) When they are effective, teams are typified by intelligibility of purpose, trust, open communication, clear roles, the right mix of talent and skills, full participation, individual performance, quality control, risk taking, collective delivery of products and services, an appropriate level of sponsorship and resources, and balanced work-life interactions. Their stages of development are likely universal.<sup>2</sup>

But here commonalities end: thanks to globalization and, chiefly, the advent of the internet, unusual teams whose members may never meet face-to-face have come to proliferate.<sup>3</sup>

Their distinct configurations raise unique challenges for managers, to which literature and practice are only just beginning to pay attention.

## RATIONALE

Competitive advantage is derived through cost leadership, differentiation, and focus. Organizations that pool knowledge workers quickly from different functions, locations, and organizations can leverage virtual teams as a factor of competitive advantage. The tools, methods, and approaches that they use to do so with effect spell the difference between success and failure, within and across organizations.

## DEFINITION

A virtual team is a group of people who routinely work interdependently for a joint objective across time, distance, and organization. (To these three dimensions some add culture.) There are many types of virtual teams,<sup>4</sup> but probably the most important characteristic is that the members cannot always

<sup>1</sup> Some hold that mutual accountability distinguishes a team from a working group.

<sup>2</sup> All groups develop in five stages beginning with membership, working through subgrouping, confrontation, and differentiation to the more effective form of shared responsibility.

<sup>3</sup> Real-time remote teaming may be recent but remote coordination has existed for centuries, gaining speed as documentation techniques and communications improved. Nowadays, you work virtually—even internally—if you communicate by electronic mail, share information with colleagues on websites or via social (conversational) technologies, e.g., instant messaging, text chat, internet forums, web logs, and wikis, or take part in teleconferences. To what extent depends on each and every.

<sup>4</sup> Typologies admit that the nature of a virtual team varies in a continuum determined by the variability of their characteristics. Two extreme cases are the archetype of the virtual team (primarily defined by a short lifespan) and relatively permanent virtual teams (defined by a stable framework). The seven basic types are (i) networked teams—that collaborate for a common purpose with generally diffuse and fluid membership; (ii) parallel teams—that boast distinct membership and work in the short term to carry out special assignments, tasks, or functions; (iii) project or product development teams—that conduct nonroutine tasks for customers or users over a defined period, with specific and measurable results, and wield decision-making authority; (iv) work, functional, or production teams—that deliver regular, ongoing activities with clearly defined membership; (v) service teams—that take turns to meet customer or organizational needs with technical support around the clock; (vi) action teams—that offer rapid responses, often in emergency situations; (vii) offshore information system development outsourcing teams—that deliver portions of subcontracted work to an offshore independent service provider in conjunction with an onshore team; and (viii) management teams—that act collaboratively in an organization on a daily basis but are dispersed across a country or around the world.



**Table 1: How Teams Form and Operate**

From	To
Team membership is fixed.	Team membership shifts.
All team members are drawn from the organization.	Team members can include people from outside the organization.
Team members are dedicated full-time to the team.	Most team members are members of multiple teams.
Team members are co-located organizationally and geographically.	Team members are distributed organizationally and geographically.
Teams have fixed starting and ending points.	Teams form and reform continuously.
Teams are managed by a single manager.	Teams have multiple reporting relationships with different parts of the organization, and often with other organizations, at different times.

Source: Lisa Kimball. 1997. Managing Virtual Teams. Speech delivered at the Team Strategies Conference sponsored by Federated Press, Toronto, Canada. Available: [www.groupjazz.com/pdf/vteams-toronto.pdf](http://www.groupjazz.com/pdf/vteams-toronto.pdf)

meet face-to-face (for one reason or another):<sup>5</sup> Of necessity, they rely on (an increasingly powerful array of) interactive technologies.<sup>6</sup>

## THE PROS AND CONS OF VIRTUAL TEAMS

The main benefit of virtual teaming is that it allows organizations to be more flexible and procure talent from different functions, locations, and organizations without geographical restrictions.<sup>7</sup> The main drawback owes to lost context,<sup>8</sup> which generates feelings of isolation and undermines trust<sup>9</sup> (especially when members are from different cultures).

## THE CHALLENGES OF VIRTUAL TEAMING

It is, of course, vital that virtual teams enjoy the same (or higher) critical foundations as effective face-to-face teams. In the absence of the normal give-and-take of face-to-face interaction, they must overcome the obstacles associated with time, distance, organization, and culture. Seven critical success factors can be identified, each calling for dedicated organizational policies, strategies, and partnerships, including their design, implementation, results, and associated business processes:

- **Human Resource Management.** Building and maintaining virtual employee identity in modern organizations is a new challenge: human resource management must resonate with virtual knowledge workers, and deal with unique issues such as visibility in the organization, career options, and paths to advancement. Virtual staff need to feel they are on a par with other workers in the organization and that their different personal and work circumstances are understood. Human resource management must overcome the perceived natural advantage of in-house employees, with possible

implications for organizational design. Lack of a sense of belonging can show up in human resource indicators, such as low morale and retention.

**“Coming together is a beginning. Keeping together is progress. Working together is success.”**

—Henry Ford

- **Learning and Development.** Modern organizations must commit to, and make resources available for, training and other ongoing learning development activities focused on working in a virtual environment. They must also educate all employees, not just virtual employees, in virtual team culture.
- **Organizational Culture.** Leadership and organizational commitment must recognize that virtual teaming is fast becoming a preferred way of working. Recognition entails promoting virtual teaming and rewarding and recognizing team members who lead and participate in virtual teams.
- **Information Management Systems.** New management, measurement, and control systems must be designed. The workload tracking and management systems that are required in a virtual, matrixed world differ from those used in conventional organizations. Details of work assignments must be made available more widely so that data and information gathered in one place for one purpose can be used in another for other purposes as well as up and down the management chain for planning and decision making. Workload tracking and management systems must evolve to span all the work performed both in and out of a department.
- **Electronic Communication and Collaboration Technologies.** For virtual teams to work effectively, members from all

<sup>5</sup> A member of a virtual team is not always a teleworker: teleworkers are individuals who work from home.

<sup>6</sup> These include audio conferencing, videoconferencing, electronic mail, voice/video mail, chat services, news forums, bulletin boards, web logs, and wikis, among others.

<sup>7</sup> Virtual teaming can also cut travel, relocation, real estate, and other business costs. (Virtual teams involved in product development can exploit time difference by sharing a design process around the world. Service teams can reap comparable benefits.)

<sup>8</sup> Communication that is not face-to-face becomes difficult because cues from facial expressions and gestures are lost.

<sup>9</sup> Trust is a means of coping with complexity and uncertainty in contexts where high levels of interdependence and interaction between different actors are necessary. It is a relationship of reliance, and the highest form of human motivation. It is the springboard of high-performance teams. (Indeed, the words “trust” and “team” are well-nigh synonymous.) Trust leads to mutual motivation, enhanced unity, and increased effectiveness and efficiency.



geographic and functional areas need access to a standard set of electronic communication and collaboration technologies.

- **Leadership.** Senior leadership must recognize that virtual teaming is fast becoming a preferred (and useful) way of working. Cross-functional management teams must be established to handle and resolve the complex,<sup>10</sup> cross-functional, and virtual issues that virtual teams deal with.

**“The problem with communication...is the illusion that it has been accomplished.”**

— George Bernard Shaw

Management system flaws in decision making must be resolved if virtual projects are to succeed. Because problems from one team can pollinate other virtual teams, management must define the escalation path to resolve cross-functional, virtual team issues.

- **Team Leader and Team Member Competencies.** Team leaders must see themselves as critical to facilitating the team's success, with a particular role in bringing the team closer together and building the interpersonal relations its members need to succeed.<sup>11</sup> Just as importantly, team members must be proficient in the use of interactive technologies—working across time, distance, organization, and culture with sensitivity to project and time parameters—and able to network.

## BUILDING TRUST

Trust is easier to destroy than to build. To appear and develop, it requires that certain conditions be met, such as a shared culture, social context, and values; physical proximity; information exchange; and time. Needless to say, most of these conditions are not easily met in the context of virtual teams. In a virtual environment, trust is based more on (ability and) delivery of the task at hand than on interpersonal relationships.<sup>12</sup> Members of virtual teams need to be sure that all others will fulfill their obligations with competence and integrity and behave in a consistent, predictable manner with a concern for the well-being of others. The level of member performance over time builds or denies trust in greater degrees than it does in conventional environments. If trust is a much more limiting factor in virtual teams, compared with face-to-face teams, it is, therefore, helpful to recognize the types that exist in professional relationships:

**“One must be fond of people and trust them if one is not to make a mess of life.”**

— E.M. Forster

- **Deterrence-Based Trust.** This basic type of trust hinges on adoption of consistent behavior and the threat of punishment if people do not follow through on what they are supposed to do, or committed themselves to doing. It is not well suited to the work of a virtual team.
- **Calculus-Based Trust.** This basic type of trust is grounded not only in fear of punishment for violating trust but also in rewards for preserving it. Such trust is based on comparison of the costs and benefits of creating and sustaining a relationship over the costs and benefits of severing it. This level of trust is easily broken by a violation of expectations and cannot meaningfully sustain a virtual team's relationship.
- **Knowledge-Based Trust.** This type of trust occurs when an individual has enough information and understanding about another person to predict that person's behavior. Accurate prediction depends on understanding—which develops from repeated interactions, communication, and efforts to build a relationship. Unlike deterrence-based trust and calculus-based trust, this type of trust is founded on information, not control. Parties cultivate knowledge of one another by gathering data and information, meeting in different contexts, and experiencing each other's range. This type of trust is the minimum that virtual teams should aim to establish.
- **Identification-Based Trust.** This type of trust develops when parties understand and endorse one another, and can act on behalf of one another in interpersonal transactions. This requires that they fully internalize and harmonize with one another's desires and intentions. Certain activities can enhance identification-based trust. For instance, organizations and individuals can assume a common identity, co-locate, create joint products and goals, and share core values. To succeed, virtual teams should aim to shift up to this level of the trust ladder.

Clearly, the nature and development of trust in virtual teams will vary according to their typology, that is, according to the properties of the team. But to trust and to be trustworthy

**“Light is the task where many share the toil.”**

— Homer

<sup>10</sup> The complexity of the issues that virtual teams deal with is a key variable in their nature that influences and shapes all other criteria.

<sup>11</sup> This goes beyond traditional responsibilities, associated with handing out assignments and coordinating work, to ensuring activities and processes that promote effective team relationships. The team leader is the person who is managing the boundary, feeding the team's accomplishments to the organization and to the individuals' function or line managers. Especially in a virtual environment, lack of recognition can make an individual feel isolated. Better recognition can be achieved through continual feedback and solicitation of the team's opinion. The team leader must also keep the team informed of management and other corporate news or events.

<sup>12</sup> Feelings, engagement, and exchanges are less important than actions.



within the limits of a virtual system means that team members may have to wade in on trust rather than wait for experience to gradually show who can be trusted with what. Trust may have to be conferred presumptively at first, but must develop to the stage that it is grounded in mutual identification. Fundamental determinants of that are open expression, information equity, and performance reliability. Trust is not one-dimensional, but changes as a relationship develops. To build trust in virtual teams, it is essential to ask effective

questions; generate clear and concise objectives, including a project implementation plan; talk (and walk) the talk; build tell-and-ask patterns; enable the free flow of data and information for constant, consistent, concerned, and concrete discussion, including the development of communication and meetings protocols; diagnose problems early and act on them; grow the virtual team's own culture and identity, including the promotion of virtual socializing skills; and make, share, and celebrate good news. ■

**Table 2: Toward New Management Mind-Sets**

From	To
Face-to-face is the best environment for interaction and anything else is a compromise.	Different kinds of environments can support high-quality interaction. What matters is how you use them.
Collaboration is what happens when teams interact at a fixed time and in a fixed space.	Collaboration happens in an ongoing, boundaryless way.
Being people-oriented is incompatible with using technology.	Using technology in a people-oriented way is possible and desirable.
When the communication process breaks down, blame the technology.	When the communication process breaks down, evaluate management and interaction strategies, not just the technical tool.
Learning to manage virtual teams is about learning how to use the technology.	Learning to manage virtual teams is about understanding more about teams and the collaboration process.

Source: Lisa Kimball. 1997. Managing Virtual Teams. Speech delivered at the Team Strategies Conference sponsored by Federated Press, Toronto, Canada. Available: [www.groupjazz.com/pdf/vteams-toronto.pdf](http://www.groupjazz.com/pdf/vteams-toronto.pdf)

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### COLLABORATION MECHANISMS

When working with others, efforts sometimes turn out to be less than the sum of the parts. Too often, not enough attention is paid to facilitating effective collaborative practices.



# A Primer on Corporate Values

**Corporate values articulate what guides an organization's behavior and decision making. They can boost innovation, productivity, and credibility, and help deliver thereby sustainable competitive advantage. However, a look at typical statements of corporate values suggests much work remains to be done before organizations draw real benefits from them.**



## SOME FACTS ON CORPORATE GUIDANCE SYSTEMS

Advertising strong, positive corporate values is à la mode.<sup>1</sup> Why? In a globalizing world, meaningful values can, for example, instill a sense of identity and purpose in organizations; add spirit to the workplace; align and unify people; promote employee ownership; attract newcomers; create consistency; simplify decision making; energize endeavors; raise efficiency; hearten client trust, loyalty, and forgiveness for mistakes; build resilience to shocks; and contribute to society at large.<sup>2</sup>

However, corporate values can backfire with glare when management or personnel fail to live up to the messages, a sure recipe for disenchantment or cynicism among clients, audiences, and partners, not to forget personnel itself.<sup>3</sup> In most such cases,

the cause of tension is that organizational goals, principally couched in financial terms, often do not reflect (when they do not conflict with) the corporate values propounded and the underlying organizational culture from which such values are supposed to spring. Lest they become debased, corporate values should not be platitudes, orders of preference expressed in operational jargon, or even simple aspirations.<sup>4</sup> They should not be politically correct. To serve as real guidance systems, living values that spring from integrity, morality, and ethics must be internalized by personnel<sup>5</sup> and reviewed at intervals to maintain relevance in changing contexts;<sup>6</sup> that rarely happens.

In *The Neuroscience of Leadership*,<sup>7</sup> David Rock and Jeffrey Schwartz share a few home truths on organizational

<sup>1</sup> The impetus came from *In Search of Excellence*, a book that made out eight common attributes—hands-on, value-driven company philosophies among them, credited with the success (at the time) of the 43 organizations covered. See Thomas Peters and Robert Waterman. 1982. *In Search of Excellence: Lessons from America's Best-Run Companies*. Harper & Row.

<sup>2</sup> As the term should make clear, an organization is both a complex social system and a living community.

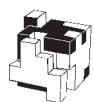
<sup>3</sup> Enron Corporation's code of ethics, issued on 1 July 2000, publicized that company's values as respect, integrity, communication, and excellence. In late 2001, it was revealed that Enron's reported financial condition had been sustained by institutionalized, systematic, and creatively planned fraudulent accounting practices. Enron has since become a byword for willful corporate corruption.

<sup>4</sup> A representative smattering of value statements includes words such as teamwork, customers, community, passion, and innovation. All the same, personnel understand what is real about these values not so much from what is written but from what is put into practice.

<sup>5</sup> Corporate values that are drawn by management are not rooted in basic social convictions and cannot be the bedrock of an organizational constitution. They serve only to rally the troops and are therefore manipulative in nature. What is more, advertising corporate values does not necessarily mean they will be practiced: over time, personnel weave their own interpretations and ideologies into organizational behavior; therefore, it is essential that personnel and management share an understanding of what corporate values are (or might be). Obviously, there must be reciprocity of obligation, enshrined in through two-way communications.

<sup>6</sup> Some argue that corporate values exist to see an organization through both good and bad times and that they cannot be altered. This may be an excessively uncompromising position: every now and then, even the best business model hits a wall. According to Peter Drucker, business models rest on three legs: assumptions about the environment of the organization, the specific mission of the organization, and the core competencies needed to accomplish that. See Peter Drucker. 1994. *Theory of the Business*. *Harvard Business Review*. September; pp. 95–104. Without straying from the topic of these *Knowledge Solutions*, in keeping with their focus on improving corporate practices, it is pertinent to note that the assumptions, specific mission, and core competencies of organizations only address the why and what of business. However, relatively new notions of management models are beginning to answer the equally important question of its how. According to Julian Birkinshaw, a management model embodies the choices that the executives of an organization make to define objectives, motivate effort, coordinate activities, and allocate resources—in other words, the choices they make to define how the work of management gets done. See Julian Birkinshaw. 2010. *Reinventing Management: Smarter Choices for Getting Work Done*. Jossey-Bass.

<sup>7</sup> David Rock and Jeffrey Schwartz. 2006. *The Neuroscience of Leadership. strategy+business*. Vol. 43.



transformation. They bear relevance to the subject of these *Knowledge Solutions* since change is what the introduction of corporate values usually purports, at least from the outset. According then to David Rock and Jeffrey Schwartz:

- **Change is pain.** Organizational change is unexpectedly difficult because it provokes sensations of physiological discomfort.
- **Behaviorism does not work.** Change efforts based on incentive and threat (the carrot and the stick) rarely succeed in the long run.
- **Humanism is overrated.** In practice, the conventional empathic approach of connection and persuasion does not sufficiently engage people.
- **Focus is power.** The act of paying attention creates chemical and physical changes in the brain.
- **Expectation shapes reality.** The preconceptions of people significantly impact what they perceive.
- **Attention density shapes identity.** Repeated, purposeful, and focused attention can lead to long-lasting personal evolution.

## THE MEANING OF CORPORATE VALUES

To note, corporate values do not equate with organizational culture: that describes the attitudes, experiences, beliefs, and values of the organization, acquired through social learning, that control the way individuals and groups in the organization interact with one another and with parties outside it.<sup>8</sup> Corporate values are first-order operating philosophies or principles, to be acted upon, that guide an organization's internal conduct and its relationship with the external world.<sup>9</sup> (To be clear, corporate values do not drive the business; however, if they are imbedded in business processes—and made credible to skeptics—they inspire the people who deliver the business, with a healthy balance between work and life and between the short term and the long term.) The ultimate glue that bonds the best organizations, they are usually formalized in explicit—often espoused, not just embedded—mission statements, tag lines, and branding material. Important elements are content and context.<sup>10</sup>

**“People don't resist change. They resist being changed!”**

—Peter Senge

### Box 1: The Corporate Values of the United States National Park Service

- **Shared Stewardship**—We share a commitment to resource stewardship with the global preservation community.
- **Excellence**—We strive continually to learn and improve so that we may achieve the highest ideals of public service.
- **Integrity**—We deal honestly and fairly with the public and one another.
- **Tradition**—We are proud of it, we learn from it, we are not bound by it.
- **Respect**—We embrace each other's differences so that we may enrich the well-being of everyone.

Source: United States National Park Service. 2010.

**“How can an enterprise build capabilities, forge empowered teams, develop a deep understanding of customers, and—most importantly—create a sense of community and common purpose unless it has a relationship with its employees based on trust and caring?”**

—Robert Waterman

## DRAWING REAL VALUE FROM CORPORATE VALUES

The W. Edwards Deming Center for Quality Management has shown that organizations waste up to 50% of productive time through lack of trust,<sup>11</sup> a fundamental intangible that corporate values can certainly promote. In view of that, beginning about 10 years ago, some organizations have engaged in values-driven management improvement efforts, including values training, appraising management and personnel on their adherence to corporate values, and employing organizational development specialists to help them understand how their corporate values affect performance. Have any trends emerged from their activities?

Usefully, in 2005, the Aspen Institute and Booz Allen Hamilton executed a major global study of corporate values.<sup>12</sup> They surveyed senior management in 365 companies in 30 countries in five regions, almost one-third of whom were chief executive officers or board members.<sup>13</sup> The fundamental findings of the study were the following:

<sup>8</sup> A standard typology of this complex subject refers to communal, networked, mercenary, and fragmented cultures.

<sup>9</sup> For reference, at the individual level, values are a small set of key concepts and ideals that guide a person's life and help him or her make important decisions. Evidently, in organizations, matching individual values to corporate values is no easy matter. Still, people are more likely to put effort into living their organization's corporate values if they understand the fit between these and their own.

<sup>10</sup> Content refers to the meaningfulness of corporate values, characterized for instance by authenticity, specificity, tangibility, and ease of application. Context refers to the degree to which the corporate values can be woven into everyday thinking and behavior: they must pervade the organization, for example, through the ways people are selected, managed, assessed, recognized, promoted, rewarded, etc.

<sup>11</sup> John Whitney. 1995. *The Economics of Trust: Liberating Profits and Restoring Corporate Vitality*. McGraw-Hill.

<sup>12</sup> Chris Kelly, Paul Kocourek, Nancy McGaw, and Judith Samuelson. 2005. *Deriving Value from Corporate Values*. The Aspen Institute and Booz Allen Hamilton. Available: [www.aspeninstitute.org/publications/deriving-value-corporate-values](http://www.aspeninstitute.org/publications/deriving-value-corporate-values)

<sup>13</sup> The study invited about 9,500 senior executives from around the world to help understand how companies are dealing with the challenges of managing values: What are the dimensions of corporate values? What are the factors that enable and hinder executives in making decisions based on their corporate values? What is the value of corporate values? What are the best practices for applying corporate values?

- **Ethical behavior is part of a company's license to operate.** Of the 89% of companies that had a written corporate values statement, 90% singled ethical behavior and integrity as an operating philosophy or principle. Further, 81% believed that formal statements of corporate values were important to reinforce these.
- **Most companies believe values influence two important strategic areas—relationships and reputations—but do not see the direct link to growth.** Commitment to clients was a value included in corporate statements in 88% of companies. Substantial majorities also categorized employee recruitment and retention and corporate reputation as both important to their business strategy and strongly affected by values. However, although companies said that such values as adaptability, productivity, and product quality and innovation are important to strategy, few thought that these values directly affect revenue and earnings growth.
- **Most companies are not measuring their return on values.** In a business environment increasingly dominated by attention to definable returns on specific investments, most senior executives were surprisingly lax in quantifying a return on values. Less than 40% volunteered they can directly link revenue and earnings growth.
- **But financial leaders are approaching values more comprehensively.** Companies that reported superior financial results emphasized values such as commitment to employees, drive to succeed, and adaptability far more than their peers. They were also more successful in linking values to the way they run their companies:

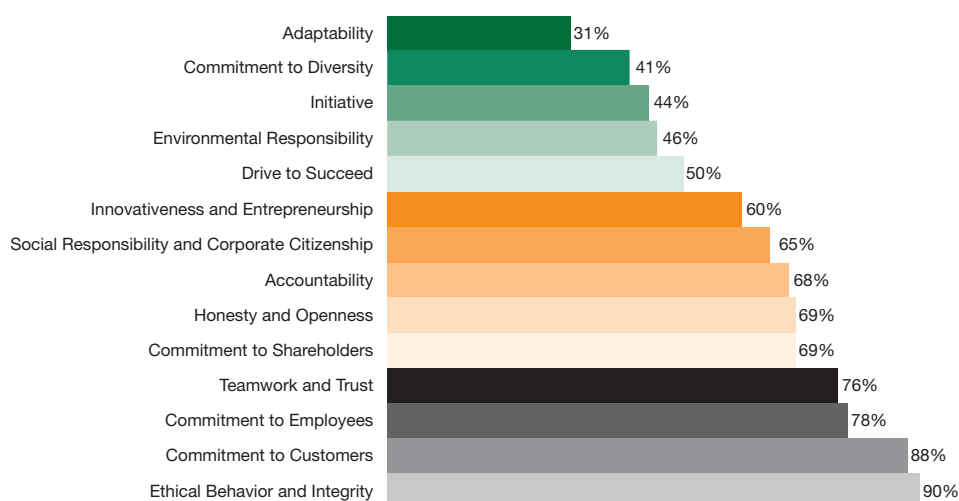
a significantly greater number reported that their management practices were effective in fostering values that influence growth, and they were more likely to believe that social responsibility and corporate citizenship as well as environmental responsibility have a positive effect on financial performance.

- **Values practices vary significantly by region.** Asian and European companies were more likely than North American firms to emphasize values related to the corporation's broader role in society, such as social responsibility and corporate citizenship and environmental responsibility. The manner in which companies reinforced values and aligned them with their strategies also varied by region.
- **The tone of the chief executive officer matters.** As many as 85% of the respondents reported their companies relied on explicit chief executive support to reinforce corporate values. And 77% claimed it was the most effective practice for reinforcing the company's ability to act on its values. (Respondents considered it so irrespective of geography, industry, or company size.)

## THE STRATEGIC VALUE OF VALUES

Rosabeth Moss Kanter,<sup>14</sup> in a book concerned with the global crisis of business and American-style capitalism, echoes Julian Birkinshaw's view that new business models must arise: specifically, in the corporate sector, these are to be models that serve society in addition to rewarding shareholders and employees. She sees strong potential synergy between financial performance and attention to community and social needs,

**Figure: Values Included in Corporate Values Statements (All Respondents)**



Source: Chris Kelly, Paul Kocourek, Nancy McGaw, and Judith Samuelson. 2005. *Deriving Value from Corporate Values*. The Aspen Institute and Booz Allen Hamilton. Available: [www.aspeninstitute.org/publications/deriving-value-corporate-values](http://www.aspeninstitute.org/publications/deriving-value-corporate-values)

<sup>14</sup> Rosabeth Moss Kanter. 2009. *SuperCorp: How Vanguard Companies Create Innovation, Profits, Growth, and Social Good*. Crown Business.





unique competitive advantage from embracing the values and expectations of a new generation of professionals, and growth opportunities from stressing corporate values and restraining executive egos when seeking strategic alliances and integrating acquisitions. Drawing from her book, the range of advantages that values-based organizations companies tap through their strategic use of operating philosophies or principles are:

- **Competitive differentiation.** An emphasis on corporate values builds specific lines of business and strengthens an organization's brand. Success means that competitors may start emulating particular initiatives but that merely raises the bar: a clear sense of societal purpose provides a wellspring that can produce the next wave of activity. Competitors who attempt to copy initiatives without underlying corporate values will always be behind the vanguard.
- **Public accountability via end-to-end responsibility.** Corporate values help meet the public's request that organizations should know, care, and communicate about all aspects of their products and services—from sources to applications to ultimate disposal. Greater contact with stakeholders across the value chain builds an organization's brand and triggers opportunities for innovation.
- **Rationale for long-term thinking.** Corporate values that include operating philosophies or principles of sustainability help organizations create continuity. They become values-based organizations that have meaning<sup>15</sup> beyond their current bundle of assets or lines of business. Such values help them avoid “short-termism” and make choices with an eye on the future.
- **Common vocabulary and guidance for consistent decisions.** Corporate values are an essential guide to organizations that need to make fast decisions and take quick action in far-flung or differentiated operations. Their clear articulation helps personnel select among alternatives in a consistent manner.
- **Talent magnets and motivation machines.** Talented people are mobile but, essentially, they are attracted (and faithful) to organizations whose corporate values match their key concepts and ideals. (An organization's brand and reputation affect its ability to attract the right people.) If organizations are networks of people working toward the same end, corporate values should help ensure that personnel are proud of what they are doing and are motivated by that.

- **“Human” control systems—peer review and a self-control system.** Belief in corporate values strengthens peer responsibility for keeping one another aligned; it also generates self-guidance and self-policing. Such human control systems do not work perfectly but they reduce the need for rules and help make people feel free and autonomous:<sup>16</sup> personnel become willful actors who make their own choices based on values they support. ■

### Box 2: A Corporate Values Start-Up Kit

- Do you know what your organization's corporate values are? Is the potential tension between multiple aims explicitly acknowledged? Is the language original or reworded from elsewhere? Is it memorable? Are appropriate meanings clear, without restricting the scope of the values? Does a psychological contract suggest an unwritten set of mutual expectations between the organization and its personnel? Has psychological safety been created?
- How did your organization identify its corporate values? Which office or department developed them? Was a formal audit of existing values conducted?
- What difference would it make if your organization really practiced its corporate values? Would you be happier at work?
- How do your organization's corporate values show up in its operations? How are they communicated? How does your organization distinguish between its corporate values and its policies, strategies, structures, systems, and business processes? Has it drawn a learning charter citing commitment to corporate and individual actions?
- What is challenging about practicing, promoting, and living your organization's corporate values? What are the obstacles?
- Is the behavior of your organization's personnel measured against its corporate values through the performance management system? How are new alignments created? How are misalignments identified and corrected?
- What do your organization's corporate values mean to you? How do they fit with your individual values? How do you express these?
- How are you practicing, promoting, and living your organization's corporate values? How do they show up in your daily working life? In which parts are they weak or missing? What can you do differently to start living them, even when it is hard?
- What are you doing to bring your organization's corporate values to your team?
- What support would be helpful to you and your team so that you may better practice your organization's corporate values? To whom can you talk?

Source: Author.

<sup>15</sup> Intuitively, a clear link appears between personnel experiencing meaning and an organization's ability to manage change effectively, attract and retain talent, and engage personnel for high performance.

<sup>16</sup> Over the last 10 years, high-performance organizations have dismantled many stultifying human resource policies and procedures that, borne of old-style command-and-control management systems and enforced through endless orientation sessions, had seemed aimed only at making life harder. (In a globalizing world that demands speed and agility, the near-constant fine-tuning of thick volumes of administrative orders and administrative circulars had become a burden they could no longer afford.) Human resource departments are now expected to contribute to the accomplishment of organizational goals, not just busy themselves with personnel administration. Therefore, it is often the case that they have inspired attempts to articulate corporate values: after all, organizations must still have a behavioral bedrock lest chaos, confusion, and parochialism rule. Some human resource specialists may well feel they have jumped from the frying pan into the fire: if, as the earlier arguments suggest, much work remains to be done before organizations draw real benefits from corporate values, human resource departments must for their part reexamine human resource policies and procedures against the corporate values they (or other units) have helped promote. A checklist against which they must do so includes relevance, strategy, adaptability, applicability, familiarity, clarity, boundaries, and commitment.

## FURTHER READING

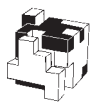
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### COLLABORATION MECHANISMS

When working with others, efforts sometimes turn out to be less than the sum of the parts. Too often, not enough attention is paid to facilitating effective collaborative practices.





# A Primer on Social Neuroscience

The human mind is driven by an emergent array of biological, cognitive, and social properties. Unconscious processes perform feats we thought required intention, deliberation, and conscious awareness. The breakthroughs of social neuroscience are fostering more comprehensive theories of the mechanisms that underlie human behavior.



## ARISTOTLE'S SOCIAL ANIMAL ...

Aristotle<sup>1</sup> saw the city—what we now call the state—as a natural community.<sup>2</sup> Since the whole must necessarily precede the parts—for if you take away the man, you cannot say that a foot or hand remains—the city comes before the family that, logically, heralds the individual. And so, the city is last in the order of becoming but first in the order of being.

Aristotle, a forward-looking naturalist who relentlessly sought the reality behind appearances and all the time expected that it might be different from what it seemed, thought it obvious that man is by nature a social animal (and that whosoever is naturally and not accidentally unfit for society must be either inferior or superior to man). In his *Politics* and elsewhere—for example, in *The History of Animals*, *Metaphysics*, *On Memory and Reminiscence*, and *On the Soul*—he stressed the logic of relations between parts and wholes. Had later thinkers such as René Descartes<sup>3</sup> followed Aristotle in conceptualizing the mind as an array of powers

or potentialities (rather than as a separate entity), attributing thereby physiological or psychological capacities to the whole organism, they would have edged closer to the truth; they would not have become ensnared in intractable problems of interaction between the mind and the body. (Dualism is the condition of being double. In psychology, it is the view that the mind and body function separately, without interchange; Cartesian dualism is summed up in the philosophical statement “Cogito, ergo sum.” [“I think, therefore I am.”]) In the 21st century, it is belatedly recognized that human beings are natural: they are part of nature and they are evolving naturally;<sup>4</sup> human thinking too is natural.<sup>5</sup>

## ... MEETS SOCIAL NEUROSCIENCE ...

Human history is not only social history but also neurobiological history. Throughout most of the 20th century, social and biological explanations were widely viewed as incompatible. However, from the 1990s, the emergence of social

<sup>1</sup> Aristotle (384–322 BC), a Greek philosopher and scientist, investigated an extraordinary range of subjects including agriculture, biology, botany, chemistry, dance, ethics, government, history, literary theory, logic, mathematics, medicine, metaphysics, music, poetry, physics, politics, psychology, rhetoric, theater, and zoology. A highly original and prolific writer, he radically transformed most, if not all, the areas of knowledge he touched. More than 2,300 years after his death, despite the unavoidable shortcomings of his wide-ranging, original thinking, he counts as one of the most influential scholars who ever lived.

<sup>2</sup> Formed initially for the satisfaction of natural wants, according to him, the state exists thereafter for moral ends and the promotion of higher life.

<sup>3</sup> René Descartes (1596–1650), a French philosopher, mathematician, and physicist, insisted that mental reality must be exactly as it seems.

<sup>4</sup> Human institutions and related artifacts are the offspring of thought, skill, and social interaction. In the form of dyads, families, and groups, to cities, civilizations, and cultures, Homo sapiens has created emergent, constantly evolving and complex adaptive social structures that extend far beyond the individual. Over time, these have coevolved with the neural and hormonal mechanisms that support them because the allied social behaviors and processes have helped individuals stay alive, reproduce, and care for children sufficiently long that they too might survive to procreate and contribute adaptive socio-neural mechanisms to the gene pool. In so doing and as a result of doing so, Homo sapiens has evolved a brain and biology whose functions include formation and maintenance of social recognition, attachments, collectives, and alliances; and development of communication, oftentimes deception, as well as reasoning about the mental states of others. See John Cacioppo, Penny Visser, and Cynthia Pickett, eds. 2005. *Social Neuroscience: People Thinking about Thinking People*. MIT Press.

<sup>5</sup> In comments on memory and learning phenomena, Aristotle distinguished between recalling information to mind and storing information—or, as he put it, between remembering (the reinstatement in consciousness of something that was there before) and memory (the existence, potentially, in the mind of an earlier perception or conception). In his opinion, the main difficulties were to explain (i) how the perception of a state of affairs can be stored; (ii) how it can later be brought to mind; (iii) how it happens that, when the perception of a state of affairs is brought to mind, the relation between the representation and the original state of affairs, now absent, is such that the first is a memory of the second and is known to be such. In modern parlance, these problems relate to storage of information, retrieval of information, and the question of how representations represent.

neuroscience<sup>6</sup> vindicates Aristotle's pioneering deductions. The young science accepts that the brain is a single, pivotal component of an undeniably social species and that it is orderly in its complexity. It treats the human brain as a social organ, whose physiological and neurological reactions are directly and profoundly shaped by social interaction. (To a mammal, being socially connected to caregivers is indispensable for survival: this, incidentally, suggests that Abraham Maslow's hierarchy of needs might need to be revised to ascribe more weight to social needs, e.g., love and belonging, and esteem, in relation to self-actualization.)

Nondualistic and nonreductionistic, social neuroscience, through a multilevel and integrative approach, aims to understand the role of the central nervous system in the formation and maintenance of social behaviors and processes. Spanning the social and biological domains, e.g., molecular, cellular, system, person, relational, collective, and societal, it exploits biological concepts and neurobiological techniques such as functional magnetic resonance imaging<sup>7</sup>—which measures patterns of blood oxygenation responses in the brain as a subject engages in a particular task, to inform and refine theories of social behavior. In short, it focuses on how the brain mediates social interaction.<sup>8</sup> (Brain scans captured through functional magnetic resonance imaging show that the same areas are associated with distress, be that caused by social rejection or by physical pain.)

Arguably, the potential benefits of social neuroscience are that it can inform debates in social psychology, provide tools for measuring brain–body activity directly and unobtrusively and provide information that would be impossible to assess using other techniques, and permit the examination of social processes by pointing to the importance of social variables

**“Everything has beauty, but not everyone sees it.”**

—Confucius

(from context to culture) in altering processes within the brain and body.

### ... THROUGH THE DOORS OF PERCEPTION

Perception is the process of acquiring, interpreting, selecting, and organizing sensory information to attain awareness. It involves cognitive and affective interaction between an organism and the external world. (In the case of people, what someone perceives is a result of interplay between the perceiver,<sup>9</sup> the situation, and the perceived.) Hence, perception is not a passive reaction to, say, events or circumstances: it is an active, pervasive, and significant process through which the structure and function of the sense organs and nervous system form a vital link between the organism and the external world. In society, perception is all-important because people's attitudes and behaviors are based on their discernment of what reality is, not on reality itself. The world as it is perceived is the world that is behaviorally important: perception is projection—we all have individual assumptions and theories that help guide us through life.<sup>10</sup>

### RELATING HUMAN NATURE TO ORGANIZATIONAL CONTEXT

By bringing together biological and psychological models of the brain, social neuroscience confirms that much of human life revolves around pain and pleasure. It should come as no surprise that social behavior is governed by an overarching organizing principle of minimizing threat and maximizing

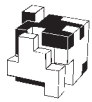
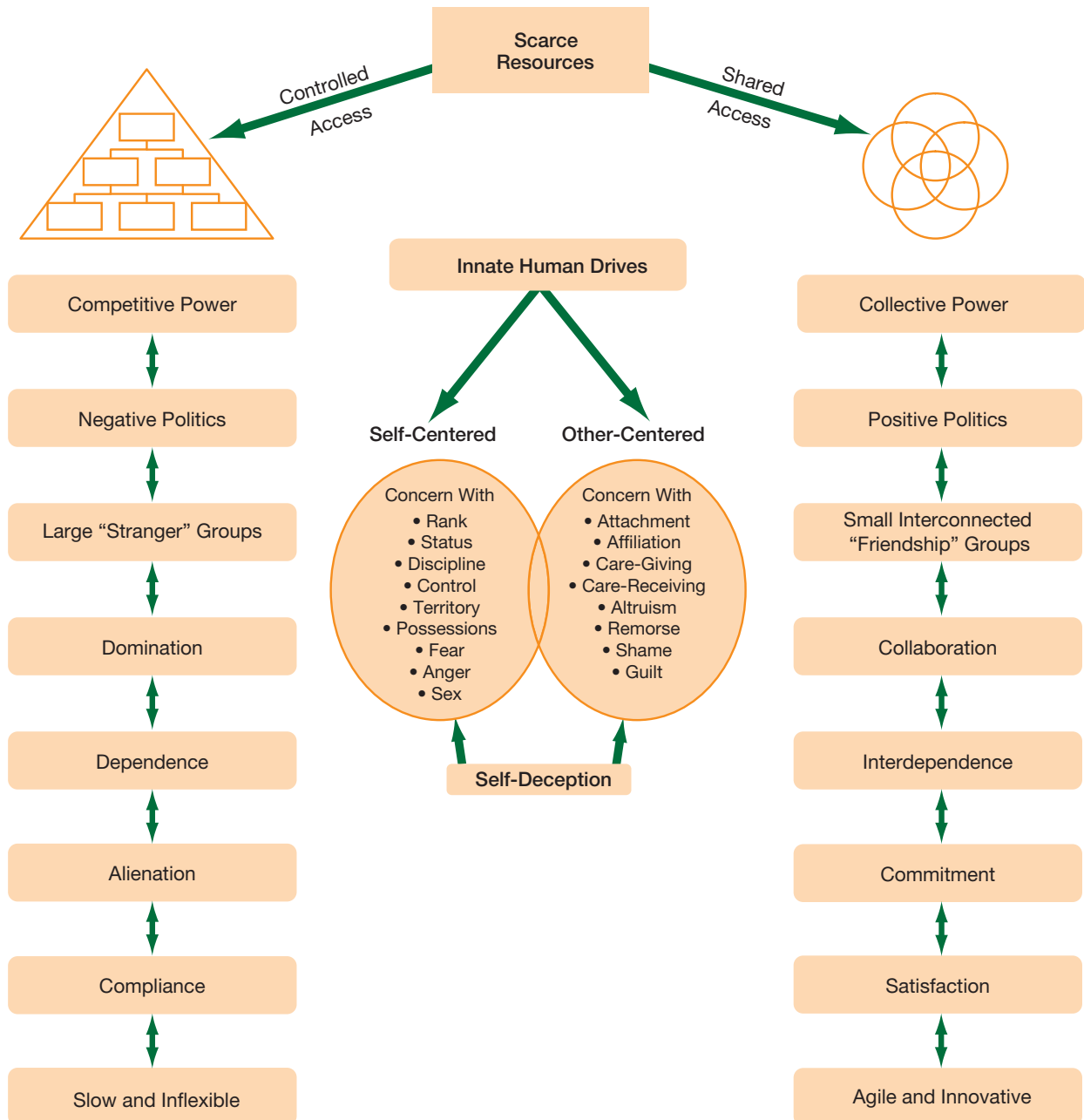
<sup>6</sup> Traditional neuroscience has treated the nervous system as an isolated entity and has largely ignored the influences of the social environments in which human beings live. We now recognize the considerable impact that social structures have on the operations of the mind and body.

<sup>7</sup> Magnetic resonance imaging is a relatively new technology: the first image was published in 1973. (In comparison, the first human X-ray was taken in 1895.) Unlike regular magnetic resonance imaging, functional magnetic resonance imaging captures a sequence of activity while it is in progress. The other techniques of neuroscience include positron emission tomography, event-related potentials, magnetoencephalography, transcranial magnetic stimulation, electrocardiograms, electromyograms, endocrinology, galvanic skin response, and studies of focal brain lesion patients.

<sup>8</sup> In the last decade, social neuroscience has shed light on aspects of social life as diverse as social regulation; social rejection; impression formation; self-awareness; emotion regulation; and attitudes, beliefs, and memory involving social groups.

<sup>9</sup> The components of a person's perceptive makeup that, in combination with the situation and the perceived, will determine behavior, are physical, social, and personal. They can be influenced by culture, religion, values, ethics, emotions, authority, rapport, attitude, persuasion, coercion, hypnosis, and genetics. Combinations of these drive, in turn, cognition and affect.

<sup>10</sup> For a taxonomy of perception, see Maxine Ruth Moore. 1970. The Perceptual-Motor Domain and a Proposed Taxonomy of Perception. *Educational Technology Research and Development*. 18 (4). pp. 379–413. The paper identifies (i) sensation—behavior that indicates awareness of the qualities (informational aspects) of a stimulus (or of material) as perceived by the senses; (ii) figure perception—behavior that suggests awareness of an entity; (iii) symbol perception—behavior that reveals awareness of figures in the form of denotative signs (when associated meanings are not considered); (iv) perception of meaning—behavior that displays awareness of the significance commonly associated with forms and patterns and events and the ability to assign personal significance to them; interpretive ability; and (v) perceptive performance—behavior that evidences sensitive and accurate observation, ability to make complex decisions where many factors are involved, and ability to change ongoing behavior in response to its effectiveness.

**Figure: Relating Human Nature to Organizational Context**

Source: Charles Ehin. 2000. *Unleashing Intellectual Capital*. Butterworth-Heinemann.

reward, informed by brain networks used for primary survival needs.<sup>11</sup> Depending on the environment, these trigger different innate human drives vis-à-vis scarce resources, to which access may be shared or controlled, that Charles Ehin<sup>12</sup> terms self-centered or other-centered. (More common usage refers to selfishness or altruism.)

**“It is a pleasure to give advice, humiliating to need it, normal to ignore it.”**

—Anonymous

Charles Ehin offers a comprehensive framework to understand how human nature can support (or undermine) voluntary workplace collaboration and innovation. He suggests that for these to thrive, organizations must develop an organizational “sweet spot.” To that intent, David Rock and Jeffrey Schwartz<sup>13</sup> have put forward a brain-based model—reminiscent of Charles Ehin’s innate human drives—that caters to the primary reward or primary threat circuitry (and associated networks) of the brain.<sup>14</sup> The model, which defines five domains of social experience deeply important to the brain—status, certainty, autonomy, relatedness, and fairness<sup>15</sup>—allows exploration of what nuanced actions to reduce threats and increase rewards might be taken in each domain to support the expansion of Charles Ehin’s organizational sweet spots.<sup>16</sup> (Supportive measures lie in the areas of managing oneself,<sup>17</sup> coaching and mentoring,<sup>18</sup> training, leadership development, and organizational systems.) Usefully, David Rock also makes suggestions for further research, which serve to underscore the potential of the approach. Questions that beg answers—and

the potential of social neuroscience is such that the list could be endless—include the following:

- Which of the domains in the SCARF model generate the strongest threats or rewards given different types of organization?
- What are the links between the five domains?
- What are the best techniques for minimizing threats and maximizing rewards in each domain?
- Does the relative importance of each domain vary across, say, individuals, gender, or tenure?
- What are the implications of the model for organizational design?

**“Nature is trying very hard to make us succeed, but nature does not depend on us. We are not the only experiment.”**

—Buckminster Fuller

## LIVE WIRES

Astonishingly, the study of the brain and nervous system is starting to allow direct measurement of thoughts and feelings. Inevitably, from applications in psychology, social neuroscience will foray into other fields.<sup>19</sup>

Organizational behavior, for one, draws considerably on social psychology and psychoanalysis. (Theories of motivation and personality are rooted in these social sciences.) There, brain-based approaches will help study the building blocks of what professionals do, such as solving complex problems, negotiating transactions, trying to persuade others, promoting

<sup>11</sup> Brains are built to detect perceived changes in the environment. Error detection signals are generated by the orbital cortex, which is closely connected to the fear circuitry in the two amygdalae. (The amygdalae perform a primary role in the processing and memory of emotional reactions.) Next, the orbital cortex and the amygdalae compete with and pull brain resources away from the prefrontal cortex, which promotes and supports higher intellectual functions, e.g., learning and comprehension. Animal instincts take over, with fight-or-flight responses.

<sup>12</sup> Charles Ehin. 2000. *Unleashing Intellectual Capital*. Boston: Butterworth-Heinemann.

<sup>13</sup> David Rock. 2008. SCARF: A Brain-Based Model for Collaborating with and Influencing Others. *NeuroLeadership Journal*. Vol. 8, No. 1, pp. 1–9.

<sup>14</sup> The approach–avoid response is a survival mechanism intended and designed to help people stay alive by quickly and easily remembering what is good or bad in the external environment. Not surprisingly, responses to threats tend to last longer than responses to rewards. See also Evian Gordon (ed.). 2000. *Integrative Neuroscience: Bringing Together Biological, Psychological, and Clinical Models of the Human Brain*. Overseas Publishers Association.

<sup>15</sup> As defined by David Rock and Jeffrey Schwartz, status is relative importance to others; certainty is the ability to predict the future; autonomy affords a sense of control over events; relatedness is the sense that one is safe with others, that they are friends rather than foes; and fairness is the perception that exchanges between people are evenhanded.

<sup>16</sup> See, for instance, David Rock. 2009. Managing with the Brain in Mind. *strategy + business*. Vol. 56.

<sup>17</sup> Thanks to the physiological perspective, we can now understand that individuals need to generate their own answers and, accordingly, that a solutions-focus is more advantageous than dwelling on problems. The power is in the focus.

<sup>18</sup> Learning new skills takes time because old patterns are hard-wired. Therefore, coaches and mentors—managers too—should refrain from giving advice: if they do, they should be unattached to the recommendations they make and flag these as options (certainly not as orders); advice puts people on the defensive because they perceive the person extending it as claiming superiority. They also need to focus on solutions with concentration and serenity. (In a threatened state, people are more likely to be “mindless.”) According to David Rock, the science of attention is a cornerstone of coaching: the elements of his ARIA model are (i) awareness of dilemma, (ii) reflection, (iii) insight, and (iv) action. See David Rock and Jeffrey Schwartz. 2006. A Brain-Based Approach to Coaching. *International Journal of Coaching in Organizations*. Vol. 4, No. 2, pp. 32–44.

<sup>19</sup> Neuroeconomics, for one, is already born. Adding observation of the nervous system to the set of explanatory variables, it enriches analyses of social, cognitive, and emotional factors (that behavioral economics concentrates on) to better interpret the economic decisions of individuals as they interact, categorize threats and rewards, and evaluate decisions. Neuromarketing, a distinct discipline related to neuroeconomics, studies the brain activity of potential consumers to marketing stimuli.

**Table: The Approach–Avoid Response: A Survival Instinct**

Response	Synonyms in Literature	Traditional Primary Factors that Activate the Response	Social Factors that Activate the Response
Approach	Accost, address, advance, befriend, construct, come close, engage, interact, resource, reward, solve, strengthen	Rewards in the form of food, water, sex, shelter, and physical assets necessary for survival	Happy, attractive faces  Rewards in the form of increasing status, certainty, autonomy, relatedness, fairness
Avoid	Abstain from, fight shy of, recoil from, retreat, steer clear of, turn away from, withdraw, withhold	Punishment in the form of removal of resources  Threat from a predator or natural elements	Fearful, unattractive, unfamiliar faces  Threats in the form of decreasing status, certainty, autonomy, relatedness, fairness

Source: Adapted from David Rock. 2008. SCARF: A Brain-Based Model for Collaborating with and Influencing Others. *NeuroLeadership Journal*. Vol. 8, No. 1, pp. 1–9.

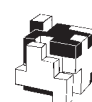
change, making decisions under pressure, and sparking creativity and innovation. They can also shed light on the critical of matter of giving feedback, which most persons perceive as an attack on their status.<sup>20</sup>

Because of its very breadth, social neuroscience will bring new tools, methods, and approaches to the challenges people and their institutions face. It will, for instance, test orthodox thinking about responsibility and blame and will impact social policies. Notwithstanding, if the journey has begun, much work remains to be done before the revolution in neuroscience applies with effect new knowledge to real-world settings. ■

## FURTHER READING

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<sup>20</sup> From the foregoing, one can be forgiven for concluding that traditional management techniques owe more to animal training than human psychology. If constant, disruptive change is the necessary, often painful, condition of mankind, the benefits of carrot-and-stick or command-and-control approaches can only be temporary (if they arise at all). Social neuroscience explains why people find change so disconcerting: therefore, it is best, with effective questions, to help people derive their own conclusions and develop homemade resolutions.



## COLLABORATION MECHANISMS

When working with others, efforts sometimes turn out to be less than the sum of the parts. Too often, not enough attention is paid to facilitating effective collaborative practices.



# Sparking Social Innovations

**Necessity is the mother of invention. The demand for good ideas, put into practice, that meet pressing unmet needs and improve people's lives is growing on a par with the agenda of the 21st century. In a shrinking world, social innovation at requisite institutional levels can do much to foster smart, sustainable globalization.**



## THE AGENDA OF THE 21ST CENTURY

In consequence of successive scientific revolutions, mankind has changed its conditions and capacities with increasing speed. Globalization is a given: today, mankind's activities are affecting the entire planet—and thereby mankind itself—for good and ill.

A select list of the worldwide challenges we face includes alleviating poverty; mitigating and adapting to climate change; ending abuse of natural resources and the environment; cleaning up environmental pollution; dealing with natural disasters; countering medical challenges, e.g., pandemics; encouraging disarmament; coping with security threats; accommodating non-state power; handling failed states; tapping capacity for social action; allaying frustration among minorities; confronting violence; identifying global rights; building a global rule of law; evolving regulatory and institutional frameworks to contain global financial and economic crises; optimizing international trade; managing mass migrations; employing human resources better; and optimizing knowledge.<sup>1</sup>

The issues our population of 6.9 billion people—projected to reach 7.7 billion in 2020—now meets head-on have causes and effects in communities, villages, towns, provinces, regions, countries, and groups of countries, needless to say in varying degrees of attribution. We must, therefore, explore human perceptions, relations, and institutions from the perspective of how communities at different scales form, operate, interface, and treat the natural world. Enlightened self-interest intimates that as many actors and agents as possible collaborate in such discussions at the optimum institutional levels to leverage social innovation in support of smart, sustainable globalization.

Innovation,<sup>2</sup> that is, incremental and emergent or radical and revolutionary changes in thinking, products, services, processes, or organizations, has always been a feature of human societies.<sup>3</sup> Typically, but not exclusively, it has, since the 15th century, been spurred by cumulative advances in material civilization, themselves impelled by entrepreneurial then, increasingly, profit-seeking corporate interests.<sup>4</sup> But the role of corporate

<sup>1</sup> Transformations in the global economy impact at all levels. However, for the more locally minded, examples of challenges in modern cities include unemployment, homelessness, crime, urban decay, pollution, access to health care, sickness and old age, disability, social discrimination, social exclusion, prostitution, drug and alcohol abuse, racism, sexism, domestic violence, teenage pregnancy, abortion, and underage drinking, among many others. For example, the Young Foundation mapped Britain's unmet needs in 2006. It found 40 key needs in six interconnected clusters: (i) poverty of power, money, and place; (ii) new forms of destitution—the results of globalization; (iii) psychic needs; (iv) needs arising from fractured families and weak family substitutes; (v) needs arising from damaging consumption; and (vi) violence and abuse. See Geoff Mulgan, Alessandra Buonfino, and Lilli Geissendorfer. 2006. *Mapping Britain's Unmet Needs*. The Young Foundation. Available: [www.youngfoundation.org/files/images/06\\_06\\_Mapping\\_Britains\\_unmet\\_needs.pdf](http://www.youngfoundation.org/files/images/06_06_Mapping_Britains_unmet_needs.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> Simply put, innovation is the act of introducing something new (or reapplying old ideas in a new way). It is commonly classified along the following dimensions: (i) process versus product, (ii) radical versus incremental, (iii) technological versus organizational, and (iv) science-led versus customer-driven.

<sup>3</sup> Peter Drucker catalogued seven causes for that: (i) unexpected occurrences, (ii) incongruities of various kinds, (iii) process needs, (iv) changes in an industry or market, (v) demographic changes, (vi) changes in perceptions, and (vii) new knowledge.

<sup>4</sup> From a corporate perspective, innovating is creating value by doing things differently (or doing them in a novel way). Based on this viewpoint, however, the incidence and value of innovation can only be established after the event. Thus, innovating is the process of creative problem solving or solution seeking in response to real problems, needs, or opportunities—designed to produce practical outcomes. Interestingly, some now argue that the private sector has a better chance of making a difference if it knows how its business agenda relates to specific social needs.





innovation can only be limited where social matters press in throngs to the fore and markets imperfectly (if at all) meet demand with supply.<sup>5</sup> Until we expand the reach of markets so that more people can reap rewards, or at least make a living, from applying their entrepreneurial mindsets to social problems, many will continue to expect that governments or charities should subsidize and fill deficits.

**“Opportunities are usually disguised as hard work, so most people don’t recognize them.”**

—Ann Landers

Yet, despite successful attempts at fostering entrepreneurial government from the mid-1990s, efforts still fall short of rising expectations and related social sector institutions continue, unfairly perhaps given the variety of needs, to be viewed as inefficient, ineffective, and unresponsive. (A more pointed observation would be that public sector organizations are just not good at embracing failure and could learn much from design thinking.) Still, government can only provide part of the answer, and for this it would have to better reflect the values of taxpayers (assuming they recognize then care about social problems).<sup>6</sup> Long-term solutions to social inequities must be broad-based and self-sustaining: in imperfect markets, that means finding ways to turn a profit so that social entrepreneurs can keep going.

Daily news provide countless examples of global interdependence and the domino effect of geopolitical settings. (The financial crisis of 2007 to the present is but the most recent.) Social enterprise is needed to cultivate products,

services, models, and approaches that address the agenda of the 21st century, finding its rightful place in, and certainly informing, the continuum of human affairs that includes mainstream business, socially responsible business, public services, and voluntarism.<sup>7</sup> The qualitative development that it can bring to the table is borne of more engaged, personalized, joined-up, adaptable, and economical services that use fewer resources to deliver better outcomes. Indeed, the agenda of the 21st century may be pointing toward a social economy in which social values and mission play stronger roles. In May 2009, President Obama announced that his administration would request a \$50 million allocation of the following year’s budget to seed a Social Innovation Fund.<sup>8</sup>

## QUID SOCIAL INNOVATION?

First and foremost, social entrepreneurs are exercised by an explicit ethical imperative. Obviously, this conditions how they perceive and assess opportunities. In comparing social and for-profit entrepreneurs, then, the question of what it is that they seek to maximize is paramount. Put simply, social innovation equates with new ideas that successfully meet social goals through mission-related impacts. Geoff Mulgan has defined it as innovative activities and services that are motivated by the goal of meeting a social need and that are predominantly developed and diffused through organizations whose primary purposes are social.<sup>9</sup> That is, social innovation from individuals, movements, and organizations tackles pressing social problems or new social issues, with a focus on problem solving and experimentation to formulate new products, services, models, and approaches.<sup>10</sup>

Much as corporate innovation, social innovation can only thrive if it meets a need. And, as might be expected, its stages

<sup>5</sup> Besides, most corporate innovation is no longer born within the walls of an organization. Technologies, for instance, as distinct from their applications, are increasingly being bought and sold. “The cathedral and the bazaar” connotes closed and open models of innovation (and the gradual erosion of the former). At the same time, today’s users demand a role in defining and shaping what they need. Traditional concepts of innovation—such as what it is, who does it, where it is conceived, where it comes from, how it is organized, and who it affects, as well as the discovery skills associated with individual “serial innovators,” e.g., associating, questioning, observing, experimenting, and networking—provide less and less explanatory traction. This is not to denigrate the crucial role of outstanding individuals, as the accomplishments of William Wilberforce, Robert Owen, Florence Nightingale, Gandhi, Fazle Hasan Abed, and Muhammad Yunus, among others, attest. However, given the barriers that concern for efficiency, vested interests, mindsets, and longstanding relationships pose, it is better not to conceive of social innovation as a discovery: it is, rather, a continuous, collaborative, and cumulative activity involving many actors and agents in which ideas are shared, tested, refined, developed, and applied, with the occasional leap forward—or across to another sector. A systems approach to innovation would locate actors and agents as well as their interactions at individual, interpersonal, organizational, inter-organizational, and system levels; and pay attention to the norms, regulations, rules of the game, and habits that govern these.

<sup>6</sup> An externality is a consequence of an economic activity that is experienced by unrelated third parties. In imperfect markets, externalities are the rule, not the exception, and their impacts grow in proportion to social inequality. Externalities color value. Measuring and communicating social value is important and can help social enterprise become more competitive. However, social accounting practices are underdeveloped and only rarely codified in legislation. A related concern is that of ethical markets, embodying values of trust, transparency, and contract law, aiming to offset mankind’s propensity to barter without concern for the social and environmental consequences of production and exchange, including side- (or frontal) effects on third parties. While the ability of government to allocate resources is limited, its role as norm setter, rule maker, enforcer, and overseer of markets is essential.

<sup>7</sup> Voluntarism is the sphere of social activity undertaken by organizations that are nonprofit and nongovernmental, e.g., voluntary and community groups, charities, cooperatives, and mutuals. It is sometimes referred to as the third sector in reference to the public and private sectors. (In the United Kingdom, the Office of the Third Sector in the Cabinet Office that coordinates policy and strategy across government departments is tasked with enabling voice and campaigning, strengthening communities, transforming public services, and encouraging social enterprise.) In 1976, Daniel Bell predicted that the third sector would become the predominant sector in larger society, increasingly central to its health and well-being.

<sup>8</sup> Details are at [www.whitehouse.gov/blog/what-is-the-social-innovation-fund/](http://www.whitehouse.gov/blog/what-is-the-social-innovation-fund/)

<sup>9</sup> Geoff Mulgan. 2007. Social Innovation: What It Is, Why It Matters, and How It Can Be Accelerated. Skoll Center for Social Entrepreneurship. Working Paper. Available: [www.sbs.ox.ac.uk/centres/skoll/research/documents/social\\_innovation.pdf](http://www.sbs.ox.ac.uk/centres/skoll/research/documents/social_innovation.pdf)

<sup>10</sup> The definition distinguishes social from corporate innovation. To this day, that is generally stimulated by profit maximization. In truth, however, there are many borderline cases. What is more, and is increasingly likely to be so, the products and services that organizations sell can in the final analysis only succeed if they address a fundamental social needs, however that might reveal itself. Therefore, recognizing that innovation is inescapably a public-private undertaking, Rosabeth Moss Kanter presciently envisioned 10 years ago that the social sector might become a learning laboratory for corporate interests. (By the same token, more and more social entrepreneurs use business formats to achieve their objectives.) See Rosabeth Moss Kanter. 1999. From Spare Change to Real Change: The Social Sector as a Beta Site for Business Innovation. *Harvard Business Review*. May–June. pp. 122–132.



**Table 1: Where Social Enterprise Sits**

	Mainstream Business	Socially Responsible Business	Social Enterprise	Public Services	Voluntarism
Inputs, Finance, and Resources	Financial and commodity markets	Financial and commodity markets	Ethical investment and fair trade sources	Tax and borrowing, public employment	Donations, charity, giving
Processes and Work	Value chain, lean production, just-in-time	Greater attention to supply chain management of ethical and environmental issues	Heavily biased toward social inclusion and environmental objectives	Public service value chains combined with contracting out	Volunteering into social projects
Outputs, Consumers, and Markets	Consumer markets selling on price, quality, and brand	Some green and fair trade branding	Green, fair trade and social inclusion central to brands	Access to public services, politically determined nontraded, limited co-payment	Gift, given away, no charge
Social Value Chain	Business generates jobs and profits, pays taxes, allows philanthropy, and provides useful goods and services	Business can be done in a more socially responsible way—meeting social goals builds a better business	Social goals are primary, business is a way to achieve them—meeting business goals creates more social impact	Government essential to provide nonmarket public goods at scale that neither the voluntary sector nor mainstream business can	Giving culture underpins efforts at public good creation in all sectors; new wave of voluntary solutions

Source: Charles Leadbeater. 2007. *Social Enterprise and Social Innovation: Strategies for the Next Ten Years*. A Social Enterprise Think Piece for the Office of the Third Sector. Available: [www.charlesleadbeater.net/cms/xstandard/social\\_enterprise\\_innovation.pdf](http://www.charlesleadbeater.net/cms/xstandard/social_enterprise_innovation.pdf)

**“We are what we repeatedly do. Excellence, then, is not an act, but a habit.”**

—Aristotle

also involve (i) generating ideas by understanding needs and pressure to change and identifying potential solutions; (ii) designing, developing, prototyping, and piloting ideas; (iii) assessing, then scaling up and diffusing the best ideas; and (iv) learning and evolving.<sup>11</sup> However, there is another side to the coin. The motives that spark social innovation, for instance, are likely to be quite different: they may include material incentives but the principal drivers of accomplishment will habitually range broadly to include such concerns as care, compassion, identity, autonomy, and recognition. Critical resource requirements will also diverge: money is the bottom line in business; however, social innovations often seek out and rest on political support, volunteers, and philanthropic commitment. Patterns of growth are not the either: social

**“Social entrepreneurs have existed throughout history. St. Francis of Assisi, the founder of the Franciscan Order, would qualify as a social entrepreneur—having built multiple organizations that advanced pattern changes in his “field.” Similarly, Florence Nightingale created the first professional school for nurses and established standards for hygiene and hospital care that have shaped norms worldwide. What is different today is that social entrepreneurship is developing into a mainstream vocation, not only in the United States, Canada, and Europe, but increasingly in Asia, Africa, and Latin America. In fact, the rise of social entrepreneurship represents the leading edge of a remarkable development that has occurred across the world over the past three decades: the emergence of millions of new citizen organizations.”**

—David Bornstein

<sup>11</sup> The process of social innovation is given a full treatment in Robin Murray, Julie Caulier-Grice, and Geoff Mulgan. 2010. *The Open Book of Social Innovation*. The Young Foundation. Available: [www.youngfoundation.org/files/images/Open\\_Book\\_of\\_Social\\_Innovation.pdf](http://www.youngfoundation.org/files/images/Open_Book_of_Social_Innovation.pdf)



**Table 2: Social Innovations in the Social Field**

Generation	Development	Mainstreaming
<b>Social Organizations</b>		
Practice, imagination, beneficiaries, and user inputs generate possibilities.	Start-ups, incubators, learning by doing, and pilots road-test ideas.	Organizational growth, emulation, replication, and franchise to achieve scale.
<b>Social Movements</b>		
Small groups, seeking like-minded allies, spurred by anger, resentment.	Movements try to demonstrate worthiness, unity, numbers, and commitment.	Governments endorse claims and pass legislation. Public habits change.
<b>Politics</b>		
Nongovernment organizations, party activists, people in need, and the media make demands for new programs.	Politicians become champions. Ministers and officials take up issues and give political commitment.	Bureaucrats and professionals implement, provide funding, and authority.
<b>Government</b>		
Creativity methods, consultations, contestability, and the adaptation of models from other sectors generate possibilities.	Incubators, zones, and pathfinders—with assessment and evaluation methods—test and capture lessons.	Growth, new structures, franchises, and spending programs achieve scale.
<b>Business</b>		
Enthusiasts produce and consume in what is almost a gift economy.	Small companies, mission-related investment, and consumer and shareholder activism develop niche markets.	Multinationals and majors buy in and achieve marketing clout.
<b>Academia</b>		
New ideas are developed on the margins of academia.	Ideas are tested in practice or spread through academic networks.	The once-radical idea becomes mainstream.

Source: Compiled and adapted from Geoff Mulgan. 2007. Social Innovation: What It Is, Why It Matters, and How It Can Be Accelerated. Skoll Center for Social Entrepreneurship. Working Paper. Available: [www.sbs.ox.ac.uk/centres/skoll/research/documents/social\\_innovation.pdf](http://www.sbs.ox.ac.uk/centres/skoll/research/documents/social_innovation.pdf)

organizations or movements do not, in general, grow as quickly as corporate interests yet tend to be more resilient. How the success of innovation is judged defers too: scale or market share, for example, matter little when the unmet need is intense but well circumscribed. Lastly, each social field exhibits distinct patterns, drivers, and inhibitors, with implications for short- (days, weeks, months), medium- (1–3 years), and long-term (3–20 years) horizons for decision making.<sup>12</sup> (Some social problems may require generational timescales.)

## USING EMERGENCE TO BOOST SOCIAL INNOVATION

Notwithstanding the difficulties caused by externalities and the shortage of ethical markets, the paucity of sustained and systematic analysis is hindering the practice of social

innovation. This is where innovation accelerators such as the Social Innovation Fund can play a role.<sup>13</sup>

**“If you have built castles in the air, your work need not be lost; that is where they should be. Now put foundations under them.”**

— Henry David Thoreau

However, rather than worry about critical mass, social entrepreneurs foster critical connections to kindred spirits, strengthen these as communities and networks of practice, and develop those further as systems of influence. Critical to this, from a systems perspective, are what Geoff Mulgan calls

<sup>12</sup> In social organizations, Geoff Mulgan explains that social innovation is facilitated by practitioner networks, political allies, strong civic institutions, and the support of progressive foundations and philanthropists. For social movements, basic legal protections and status, in addition to open media and the internet, are key. In politics and government, the conditions are likely to include competing parties, think tanks, innovation funds, contestable markets, and plentiful pilots. In business, social innovation can be driven by competition, open cultures, and accessible capital. In all social fields, global links make it easier to learn lessons and share ideas at an early stage.

<sup>13</sup> In the United Kingdom, the Young Foundation's Launchpad develops promising ideas into new ventures by providing funding, social capital, and entrepreneurial expertise. See Launchpad. 2010. Available: <http://launchpad.youngfoundation.org/>

connectors, viz., the entrepreneurs, brokers, and institutions that link the demand and supply and the push and pull of people, ideas, and resources. In *Why It Matters, and How It Can Be Accelerated*, from which the following draws extensively, he identifies ready entry points for action:

- **Leadership and Structures Suited to Innovation.** Leaders with the power to act in fields such as health and education can visibly value and reward social entrepreneurs and social innovations. Separate structures, insulated from day-to-day concerns, can also be developed to straddle the boundaries of organizations or systems and combine freshness of perspective with the authority to make things happen.
- **Finance Focused on Innovation.** It costs to generate, test, and then adapt ideas in the light of experience. Social innovation requires a mix of resources including grants, tax credits, subsidies, and private investment through dedicated vehicles ranging from technology-oriented venture capital to banks.
- **Public Policy Frameworks that Encourage Innovation.** Governments can improve the climate for innovation in many ways. To begin, innovativeness can be made a criterion for competitive bidding associated with public procurement. Markets for social solutions can also be developed further to include outcome-based funding models and greater competition and contestability. Decentralization can also give communities greater freedom to shape their own solutions. Innovation units can be set up in government agencies to coordinate pioneers, encourage new ideas, and promote faster learning. Laboratories can test ideas with the close involvement of users. Technology labs can focus specifically on mining mature or near-mature technologies for social potential.
- **Dedicated Social Innovation Accelerators.** New ideas must be given time to incubate in a protected environment that provides support, advice, and the freedom to evolve. A related approach is to develop accelerators that emphasize scaleable innovations in particular sectors. These accelerators can provide development funding, rapidly test out new ideas in practice, allow fast learning across a community of social innovators, and establish clear pathways for scaling up the most promising models.
- **National and Cross-National Innovation Pools.** Many of the social problems that communities around the world face

are not unique. Cross-national innovation pools can gather groups of interested governments or foundations from several countries for an aligned innovation process.

- **Research to Enhance Learning.** The world needs much more extensive, rigorous, imaginative, and historically aware research on social innovation. Alongside greater conceptual clarity and common definitions, this calls for more case studies and better analysis of success factors and inhibitors at each stage of the innovation process. Research can also investigate better links with adjacent disciplines working on private sector innovation and science, public sector improvement, and civil society. There are also opportunities for researching some specifics of social innovation, for instance, which styles of philanthropy achieve the greatest long-term impact, how corporate social responsibility systems can best contribute to scaleable and replicable models, and where internet-based business models can address social challenges. ■

**Figure: “How-To” for Social Innovation**



Source: The Young Foundation.

**Box: Are We There Yet? Private Financial Organizations Struggle to Find Green Solutions**

Presumably, the creation of sustainable livelihoods is a topic that private financial service organizations know something about. So, excitement ran high when the United Nations Environment Programme discussed the environmental implications of globalization with several of them in Frankfurt in November 2000.

To be sure, a few saw that financial service organizations can encourage sustainable development. The market-based opportunities and challenges that one speaker identified include ethical or green funds, green securities, tradable permits, and mixed instruments such as environmental bonds. The knowledge-based openings that he made out could be voluntary agreements, certification, reporting, and disclosure of information. Another explained the workings of the Nikko Eco Fund (which invests in companies that excel in environmental conservation). But most highlighted the direct, indirect, and image risks associated with environmentally sensitive projects. Except for one speaker who reminded the audience that 1.3 billion people live on less than \$1 a day, they contemplated only emerging markets.

Predictably, then, few new business models were outlined. One participant (from the United Nations Environment Programme) made clear the potential of cleaner production financing in terms of cost reduction (materials, energy, waste treatment), business upgrading (improved quality and competitiveness of green processes, products, services), and risk reduction (inherent to cleaner production). Even so, he recognized constraints, of which the small sizes of investments. (Others are the absence of business incentives, the lack of ability of the private sector to prepare creditworthy proposals, the longer payback period of such investments, undervaluation of environmental risks, and the fact that financial organizations often do not see the technical and financial merits of investment proposals.) One session on environmental management and reporting guidelines for the financial services sector also came unstuck. A panelist explained the endeavors of the Global Reporting Initiative. But subsequent talks described separate

attempts to develop a common reporting framework at the national level, and in isolation from the global initiative.

Yet the relationship between companies and the environment in which they operate is more and more important, and senior managers recognize increasingly that companies have a responsibility not only to shareholders but also to other stakeholders. Environmental (and social) accounting could embed these responsibilities. But despite its topicality, the United Nations Environment Programme's roundtable did little to advance knowledge and much remains to be done before a practical framework for action comes about.

The emphasis that several speakers placed on image risks is not encouraging. So, those who lament aid fatigue will take comfort in the fact that most examples provided on smart environmental lending were drawn from multilateral development banks, such as ADB. This suggests that they could help the financial services sector of their developing members to incorporate environmental considerations in their activities, and share their practical experiences of environment-friendly lending. And there surely exists potential for cleaner production financing — the hidden cost of waste is far greater than the cost of its treatment and disposal (counting compliance with regulations, wasteful use of raw materials, energy, and labor, tarnished images, and liability). For this reason, constraints on cleaner production financing ought not to be insurmountable, and development banks could mitigate them by means of credit lines, trust funds, policy dialogue, and training.

But the growing number of initiatives on environmental reporting, which use very different reporting frameworks, is cause for worry. It could set off a race to the top and spawn restrictive trade practices. What is more, the applicability in developing countries of the frameworks advertised is debatable. Should environmental reporting allow for regional variations? If this is not the case, how should the drafting process for global guidelines proceed?

Source: Olivier Serrat. 2001. *Private Financial Organizations Struggle to Find Green Solutions*. Frankfurt: ADB. Available: [www.adb.org/documents/periodicals/ero/2001/green\\_solutions.asp](http://www.adb.org/documents/periodicals/ero/2001/green_solutions.asp)

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**COLLABORATION MECHANISMS**

When working with others, efforts sometimes turn out to be less than the sum of the parts. Too often, not enough attention is paid to facilitating effective collaborative practices.



# Wearing Six Thinking Hats

The difference between poor and effective teams lies not so much in their collective mental equipment but in how well they use their abilities to think together. The Six Thinking Hats technique helps actualize the thinking potential of teams.



## INTRODUCTION

Routinely, many people think from analytical, critical, logical perspectives, and rarely view the world from emotional, intuitive, creative, or even purposely negative viewpoints. As a result, their arguments do not make leaps of imagination, they underestimate resistance to change, or they fail to draw contingency plans.

Lateral thinking<sup>1</sup> is reasoning that offers new ways of looking at problems—coming at them from the side rather than from the front—to foster change, creativity, and innovation. One tool of lateral thinking, the Six Thinking Hats technique, was devised by de Bono in 1985 to give groups a means to reflect together more effectively, one thing at a time.

## SIX HATS, SIX COLORS

The Six Thinking Hats technique involves the use of metaphorical hats in discussions.<sup>2</sup> Participants put on hats in turn, possibly more than once but not necessarily all of them, to indicate directions (not descriptions) of thinking. The color of each is related to a function:

- White hat thinking—neutral, objective—focuses on the data and information that are available or needed.
- Red hat thinking—emotional—looks at a topic from the point of view of emotions, feelings, and hunches, without having to qualify or justify them.

- Black hat thinking—somber, serious—uses experience, logic, judgment, and caution to examine the difficulties and problems associated with a topic and the feasibility of ideas.
- Yellow hat thinking—sunny, positive—is concerned with benefits and values.
- Green hat thinking—growth, fertility—intimates creative thinking and movement, not judgment, to generate new ideas and solutions.
- Blue hat thinking—cool, the sky above—concentrates on reflection, metacognition (thinking about the thinking required), and the need to manage the thinking process.<sup>3</sup>

## APPLICATIONS

Pertinent applications for the Six Thinking Hats technique include team productivity and communication; product and process improvement, as well as project management; critical and analytical thinking, problem solving, and decision making; and creativity training, meeting facilitation, and meeting management.

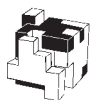
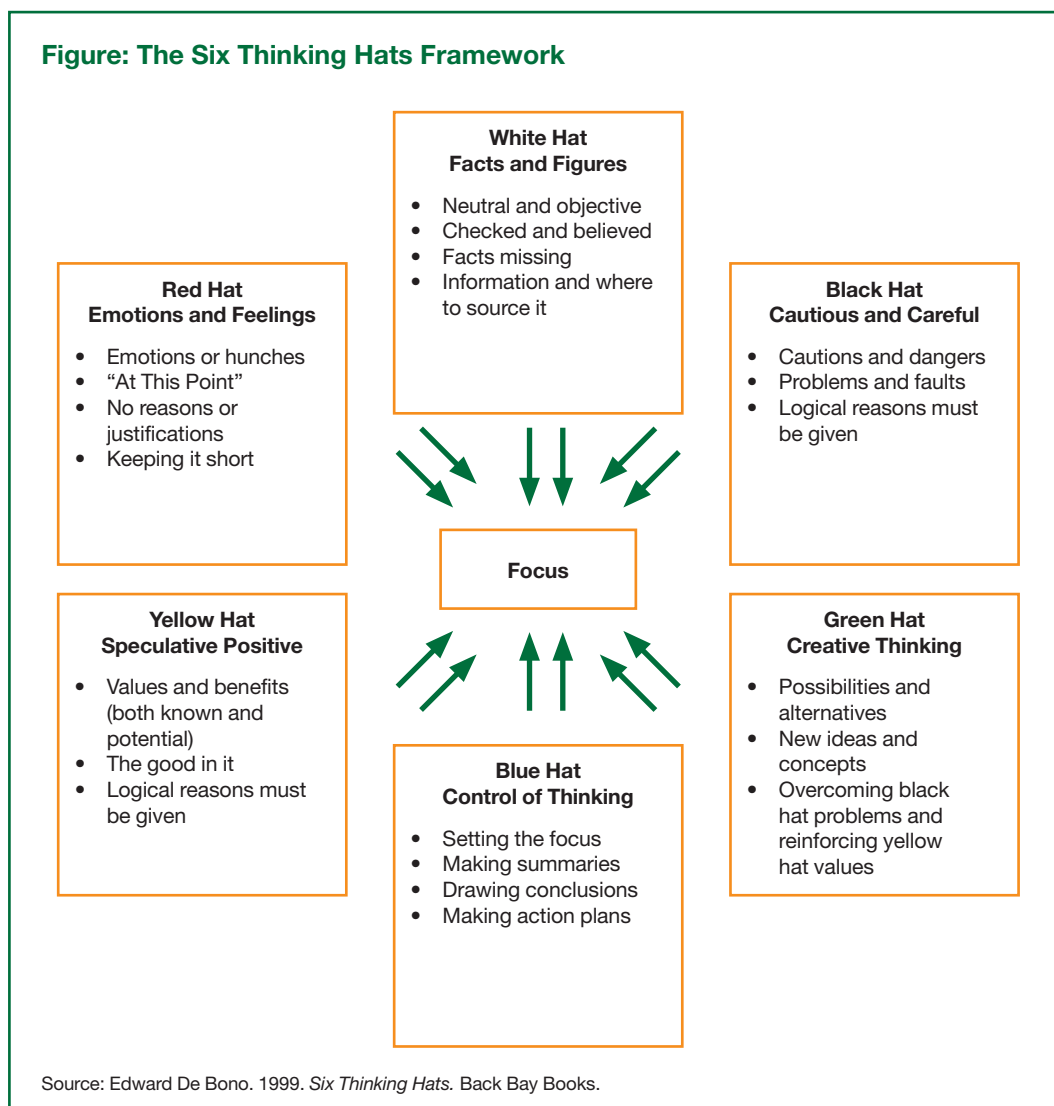
## BENEFITS

The Six Thinking Hats technique provides a common language that works in different cultures. It promotes collaborative thinking, sharpens focus, facilitates communication, reduces conflict, enables thorough evaluations, improves exploration,

<sup>1</sup> The term was coined by Edward de Bono in 1967.

<sup>2</sup> The larger benefits lie in conversations. But the technique can be also used by an individual.

<sup>3</sup> A blue hat should always be used both at the beginning and at the end of a discussion. What follows it depends on the nature of the topic and emotions about it. For instance, wearing a red hat next might defuse strong feelings. Discussions to brainstorm problems might adopt blue, white, green, red, yellow, black, green, and blue hats in sequence. Conversations seeking feedback might follow a blue, black, green, and blue hat pattern.

**Figure: The Six Thinking Hats Framework**

fosters creativity and innovation, saves time, and boosts productivity.

## DISCIPLINE

Discipline is important. The facilitator’s role is to define the focus of the thinking, plan the sequence and timing of the thinking, ask for changes in the thinking if needed, handle requests from participants for changes in the thinking, and form

periodic or final summaries of the thinking for consideration by participants. Each participant must follow the lead of the facilitator, stick to the hat being used, try to work within time limits, and contribute honestly and fully under each hat. ■

## FURTHER READING

Edward De Bono. 1999. *Six Thinking Hats*. Back Bay Books.



## COLLABORATION MECHANISMS

When working with others, efforts sometimes turn out to be less than the sum of the parts. Too often, not enough attention is paid to facilitating effective collaborative practices.





# Working in Teams

Cooperative work by a team can produce remarkable results. The challenge is to move from the realm of the possible to the realm of practice.



## BACKGROUND

Groups<sup>1</sup> that range from two persons to many are a very big part of social life (indeed, of human experience). They can be significant sites of socialization and learning, places in which beneficial relationships form and grow, and settings where knowledge and wisdom flourish. Because they also offer individuals the opportunity to work together on joint tasks and develop more complex and larger-scale activities (projects), groups can be highly rewarding to their members, organizations, and society at large. On the other hand, the socialization they offer can constrict or even oppress members. Groups can also become environments that exacerbate interpersonal conflict, for example, if one individual dominates or tries to “score points.” In addition, the boundaries that are drawn around them can exclude others—sometimes to their detriment—and create intergroup conflict. What is more, belonging to a group often warps the judgments of members: pressure to conform can lead to “groupthink” or poor decision making. Other well-nigh mundane shortcomings include diffusion of responsibility; excessive diversity of views, goals, and loyalties; and the tendency to “solve” (but not analyze) problems. These potential strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats make groups an essential focus for research, exploration, and action, for instance regarding group development (teamwork) in organizations.

## RATIONALE

In our day, most organizations embrace the notion of teamwork. The justification is that teams are better at solving problems and learn more rapidly and with more effect than individuals.<sup>2</sup> (As a minimum, they are meant to help divide work and thereby increase productivity with speed.) Still, if teams are often deemed a necessary component of organizational success their use does not guarantee it. To tell the truth, many are apprehensive about teams, or even pessimistic about their value. Most prefer to deal with individuals. Others are happier still when working on their own. Therefore, to leverage the potential value that teams can add and ensure that they are effective, members must have more than a limited appreciation of what teamwork is and what it entails: they must be competent in using small-group skills. Since these are not innate and collaboration usually stems from a feeling of being “in the same boat,” entering teams or forming them and then behaving in such ways that members can interface, take responsibility, and work together effectively on joint tasks can involve quite sophisticated abilities on the part of practitioners. (The challenge augments in the increasingly common case of virtual teams, certainly with regard to spatial distance and the technology needed to bridge data, information, and personal communication needs.)

<sup>1</sup> Definitions of a group abound but one can identify common attributes. A group is a set of individuals who identify with one another; share beliefs, values, and norms about areas of common practice or interest; define themselves (and are defined by others) as a group; engage in frequent interactions; and come together to work on joint tasks for an agreed common purpose. Importantly, this list suggests that groups are intended and organic—whether they are primary or secondary, or planned or emergent, they are not a random experience. Therefore, there are three crucial characteristics to groups: there are parts, there is relationship between the parts, and there is an organizing principle.

<sup>2</sup> By nature, teams embody wider and deeper knowledge, broader understanding, a greater diversity of problem-solving styles and skills, and firmer commitment.





## WHAT IS TEAMWORK?

From the foregoing, it follows that teamwork is a process whereby a small number of people—commonly three to 10—with complementary skills become committed to a common purpose and reach agreement on specific performance targets and indicators, a working approach, and mutual accountability. It follows further that teamwork is not a panacea, a management fad, or a way to cut costs: it is a means to an end. A team does not make “things” happen: it enables them by looking to purpose, thinking as a group, and keeping in touch with the identity and integrity of members.

## WHEN TO USE TEAMS

Is a team the best organizational structure for what an organization sets out to accomplish? Not necessarily. Given the potential weaknesses and threats associated with teams, they should only be used in situations where their strengths and the opportunities they offer are critical. That is when

- The problem is relatively complex, uncertain, and holds potential for conflict;
- The problem requires intergroup cooperation and coordination;
- The problem and its solution have important organizational consequences;
- Deadlines are tight but not immediate; and
- Widespread acceptance and commitment are critical to successful implementation of a response to a situation, condition, or issue.

## THE CHARACTERISTICS OF SUCCESSFUL TEAMS

Successful teams share many characteristics. They tap the diverse knowledge, skills, experience, and interests of members; they generate more creative responses to challenges than individuals; they catalyze fresh ideas for new products and services, better business processes, and profitable strategies; they hone the leadership abilities of members; they carry out their mission with dedication, energy, and efficiency; they engender feelings of satisfaction and pride among members; they channel conflict into productive directions. The enabling environment for such accomplishments rests on positive interdependence, individual accountability, use of emotional intelligence, promotive (face-to-face) interaction, and group processing.<sup>3</sup>

## THE KEYS TO DEVELOPING A SUCCESSFUL TEAM

To develop a successful team,

- **Encourage the team leader to follow the manager-as-developer approach.** In high-performance, contemporary organizations, team leaders must move beyond the adequate accomplishments their heroic methods have pulled off. Their prime functions are now to help determine and build common purpose, continuously develop individual skills, and groom shared-responsibility teams. These functions require not only technical competence but also problem-solving abilities and interpersonal skills.
- **Clarify the common purpose.** The members of the team must understand what the purpose is and believe that it is sufficiently important for them to sublimate their personal concerns.<sup>4</sup> For this, they need to know what outcome they are expected to deliver and understand how they will work together toward it.
- **Build trust.** Trust is a fragile thing: it takes time to build and it can be destroyed instantly. It is important to keep all team members in the loop. As attention drifts to new initiatives, team leaders may forget to alert members to opportunities or challenges. Belatedly, members may receive data and information that might have influenced their actions and they may begin to question interest in their efforts. Team leaders should also be candid about their problems and limitations. They should be available and approachable, fair and objective, and consistent and dependable. They should listen with respect to the ideas of members. They should also create a climate of openness in which members can reveal and thrash out difficulties without fear of retaliation.
- **Establish mutual accountability.** For a team to qualify as such, all members must feel responsible for both successes and failures.
- **Deliver quick-wins.** Developing a successful team takes time. Its members should put quick-wins under their belts. This can be done by setting achievable targets and spotlighting team progress. Easy accomplishments will drive cohesiveness and confidence.
- **Set up a team-support system.** Organizations that pay lip service to the value of staff working together offer little support. However, it is still possible to set ground rules when the team is formed. They might cover issues, such

<sup>3</sup> In group processing, members reflect on the team's work and the interactions among members to clarify and improve efforts to achieve the team's purpose and maintain effective working relationships. This involves describing what member actions were helpful and unhelpful; and making decisions about what actions to continue or change.

<sup>4</sup> Notwithstanding, in a fast-changing environment, a team can find itself working on a mission relevant to an obsolete strategy. To avoid this, the team should review its purpose regularly in light of changing organizational priorities.

as rotation of members and duties, including leadership; announcements about milestones met; rewards for individual efforts; standards by which the team evaluates its own progress; and even the process by which the team will disband if members think it has lost its usefulness.<sup>5</sup> If the success of the team depends critically on resources from the organization, it is important to make sure those resources will be there.

- **Teach team members new skills.** Team members and the team as a group may need to build their knowledge and skills. This may be in the areas of problem solving, communication, negotiation, conflict resolution, group processing, and learning as a team.<sup>6</sup> The opportunity for training can revitalize a team. If a team is charged with and is made responsible for training members in the best possible way to do a job, its chances of success will be higher.
- **Rotate team assignments.** Teams are formed as needed. Work, however, may become monotonous over time. Depending on the complexity of assignments, it is possible

to rotate functions and jobs, including leadership, sometimes even through drawing. Besides keeping interest and morale high, this approach ensures that members are cross-trained; it acts also as an informal certification system. On occasion, changing the composition of a group (if that is possible) may also be necessary.

- **Reward team members.** One of the hardest things for organizations to recognize is that if they install teams, they need to reward based on teams. The team's performance management system should reward interdependence and mutual accountability. Ways to evaluate and reward contributions to collective, not individual, goals can include cash and noncash awards.

## THE STAGES OF TEAM DEVELOPMENT

Teams are always work in progress. Bradford and Cohen have described team (group) development in terms of five stages leading from simple membership to shared responsibility.<sup>7</sup> The stages they distinguish also provide a relational model against

### Common Operating Characteristics of the Stages of Task-Group Development

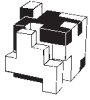
Behavioral or Skill Area	Membership	Subgrouping	Confrontation	Differentiation	Shared Responsibility
Atmosphere and Relationships	Cautious, feelings suppressed, low conflict, few outbursts	Increasing closeness within subgroups, cross-group criticism, false unanimity	Hostility between subgroups	Confident, satisfied, open, honest, differences	Supportive, open, expressive, varied; disagreement resolved promptly
Goal Understanding and Acceptance	Low, fuzzy	Increasing clarity, misperceptions	Up for grabs, fought over	Agreed on by most	Commitment to overarching goal
Listening and Information Sharing	Intense, but high distortion and low disclosure	Similarities within subgroups not as great as perceived	Poor	Reasonably good	Excellent, rapid, direct
Decision Making	Dominated by active members	Fragmented, deadlocks, to the boss by default	Dominated by most powerful, loudest	Based on individual expertise, often by the boss in consultation with subordinates	By consensus, collective when all resources needed, individual when one is expert (not necessarily the boss)
Reaction to Leadership	Tested by members, tentative	Resisted, often covertly	Power struggles, jockeying for position	General support, individual differences in influence	Highly supportive but free to disagree on issues
Attention to Way the Group is Working	Ignored	Noticed but avoided, discussed outside meetings in small groups	Used as weapon against opponents	Alternates between uncritical or overcompulsive discussion	Discussed as needed to aid work accomplishment; anyone can initiate

Source: David Bradford and Allan Cohen. 1997. *Managing for Excellence: The Guide to Developing High Performance in Contemporary Organizations*. New York: John Wiley and Sons.

<sup>5</sup> Regular review of team processes and procedures is necessary, too.

<sup>6</sup> Learning as a team is often overlooked. Training in this area can focus on what makes a learning team; creating and maintaining a learning environment in teams; understanding professional mindsets and valuing diversity; harnessing emotional intelligence; understanding learning preferences and how to use them; and avoiding "groupthink" through the use of "devil's advocates."

<sup>7</sup> The (relatively simple) stages of team development identified by Bruce Tuckman in the 1960s (and refined in the 1970s) are (i) forming, (ii) storming, (iii) norming, (iv) performing, and (v) adjourning.



which to judge progress toward a shared-responsibility team.<sup>8</sup> At that stage, individual uniqueness and collective effort are both valued. The team addresses the issues that are vital to the joint task. Members keep each other informed without wasting time. They trust one another to act, but all fight hard and fair over issue-based disagreements. A team can soar that is truly dedicated to its common purpose, able to move freely between individual and collective effort, willing to confront and support

members, committed both to performance and learning, and increasingly eager to take on management functions. ■

### FURTHER READING

David Bradford and Allan Cohen. 1997. *Managing for Excellence: The Guide to Developing High Performance in Contemporary Organizations*. New York: John Wiley and Sons.

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<sup>8</sup> Although not every group (team) progresses in exactly this sequence (and many do not get past subgrouping or confrontation), each stage is common enough and the issues fundamental enough that the model serves as a useful approximation of reality.



### COLLABORATION MECHANISMS

When working with others, efforts sometimes turn out to be less than the sum of the parts. Too often, not enough attention is paid to facilitating effective collaborative practices.



# **Knowledge Sharing and Learning**



# Asking Effective Questions

Questioning is a vital tool of human thought and interactional life. Since questions serve a range of functions, depending on the context of the interaction, the art and science of questioning lies in knowing what question to ask when.



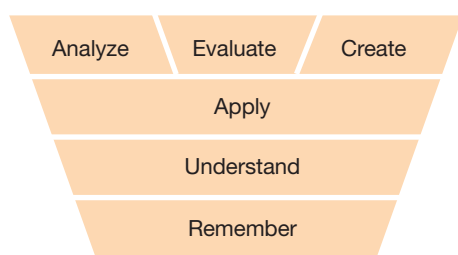
## BACKGROUND

Seeking information is a vital human activity that contributes to learning, problem solving, and decision making. Questioning<sup>1</sup> is a vital tool of human thought and social interaction<sup>2</sup> with which to open doors to data, information, knowledge, and wisdom. Questions serve a range of

“I keep six honest serving-men, (They taught me all I knew); Their names are What and Why and When, And How and Where and Who.”

— Rudyard Kipling

**Figure 1: Bloom's (Revised) Cognitive Domain<sup>3</sup>**



Source: Lorin Anderson and David Krathwohl (eds). 2000. *A Taxonomy for Learning, Teaching and Assessing: A Revision of Bloom's Taxonomy of Educational Objectives*. Allyn & Bacon.

functions,<sup>4</sup> depending on the context of the interaction. Therefore, the art and science of questioning lies in knowing what question to ask when.<sup>5</sup> A question is only as good as the answer it evokes, and questions thus contribute to success or failure across different contexts.

## TYPOLOGIES OF QUESTIONS

Derived from the context of social interaction, different classifications of questions have been proposed. The most common refers to the degree of freedom, or scope, given to the respondent. Those that leave the respondent free to select any one of several ways in which to answer are termed open questions; those that require a short response of a specific nature are labeled closed questions. Other types include recall and process questions, affective questions, leading questions, probing questions, rhetorical questions, and multiple questions.

<sup>1</sup> A question is any statement—even nonverbal, e.g., hmmm?—that invites an answer. Of course, most questions are verbal in nature (even if nonverbal signs often accompany them).

<sup>2</sup> Social interaction is a dynamic, changing sequence of social actions that take into account the actions and reactions of other individuals (or groups) and are modified based on them. Put differently, they are events in which people attach meaning to a situation, interpret what others are meaning, and respond accordingly.

<sup>3</sup> In 1956, Benjamin Bloom proposed a taxonomy of the different educational objectives that teachers set for students, encompassing psychomotor (manual or physical skills), affective (growth in feelings or emotional areas), and cognitive (mental skills) domains. Like most taxonomies, Bloom's cognitive domain is hierarchical—meaning that learning at the higher levels is dependent on having attained prerequisite knowledge and skills at lower levels. The six levels, moving through the lowest order processes to the highest, are knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation. In 2001, Lorin Anderson and David Krathwohl revised the taxonomy and its verbiage.

<sup>4</sup> For example, questions can be used to (i) obtain information; (ii) maintain control; (iii) express interest; (iv) stimulate interest and curiosity; (v) sustain attention; (vi) diagnose difficulties; (vii) ascertain attitudes, feelings, and opinions; (viii) communicate that participation is expected and valued; (ix) foster participation; (x) assess the extent of a respondent's knowledge; (xi) encourage comments on the responses of others; and (xii) prompt critical thinking and evaluation.

<sup>5</sup> In Western thought, investigation of knowledge owes much to Socrates (469–399 BC), an Athenian moral philosopher concerned with the conduct of virtuous human life through critical reasoning. The Socratic method requires participants to clarify their beliefs and understanding through questioning and dialogue.



**Table 1: Aligning Verbs to Bloom's Taxonomy**

Knowledge	Comprehension	Application
Count, Define, Describe, Draw, Enumerate, Find, Identify, Label, List, Match, Name, Quote, Read, Recall, Recite, Record, Reproduce, Select, Sequence, State, Tell, View, Write	Classify, Cite, Conclude, Convert, Describe, Discuss, Estimate, Explain, Generalize, Give Examples, Illustrate, Interpret, Locate, Make Sense of, Paraphrase, Predict, Report, Restate, Review, Summarize, Trace, Understand	Act, Administer, Articulate, Assess, Change, Chart, Choose, Collect, Compute, Construct, Contribute, Control, Demonstrate, Determine, Develop, Discover, Dramatize, Draw, Establish, Extend, Imitate, Implement, Interview, Include, Inform, Instruct, Paint, Participate, Predict, Prepare, Produce, Provide, Relate, Report, Select, Show, Solve, Transfer, Use, Utilize
Analysis	Synthesis	Evaluation
Break Down, Characterize, Classify, Compare, Contrast, Correlate, Debate, Deduce, Diagram, Differentiate, Discriminate, Distinguish, Examine, Focus, Illustrate, Infer, Limit, Outline, Point Out, Prioritize, Recognize, Research, Relate, Separate, Subdivide	Adapt, Anticipate, Categorize, Collaborate, Combine, Communicate, Compare, Compile, Compose, Construct, Contrast, Create, Design, Develop, Devise, Express, Facilitate, Formulate, Generate, Incorporate, Individualize, Initiate, Integrate, Intervene, Invent, Make Up, Model, Modify, Negotiate, Organize, Perform, Plan, Pretend, Produce, Progress, Propose, Rearrange, Reconstruct, Reinforce, Reorganize, Revise, Rewrite, Structure, Substitute, Validate	Appraise, Argue, Assess, Choose, Compare and Contrast, Conclude, Criticize, Critique, Decide, Defend, Evaluate, Interpret, Judge, Justify, Predict, Prioritize, Prove, Rank, Rate, Reframe, Select, Support

Source: Lorin Anderson and David Krathwohl (eds). 2000. *A Taxonomy for Learning, Teaching and Assessing: A Revision of Bloom's Taxonomy of Educational Objectives*. Allyn & Bacon.

## THE ART AND SCIENCE OF POWERFUL QUESTIONS<sup>6</sup>

Questions are a prerequisite to learning. They are a window into creativity and insight. They motivate fresh thinking. They challenge outdated assumptions. They lead us into the future.

A powerful question

- generates curiosity in participants;
- stimulates reflective thinking and conversation;
- surfaces and challenges assumptions;
- is thought-provoking;
- channels attention, focuses inquiry, and promises insight;
- invites creativity and new possibilities;
- generates energy, a vector to explore, and forward movement;

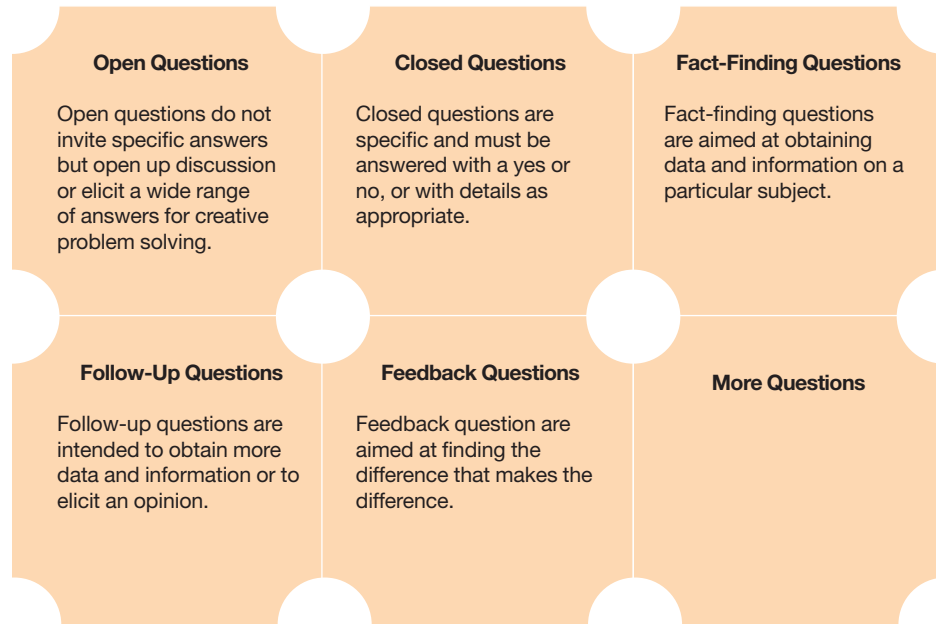
“The unexamined life is not worth living.”

—Socrates

- is broad, enduring, and stays with participants;
- touches a deep meaning; and
- evokes more questions.

Powerful questions have three dimensions: (i) architecture; (ii) scope; and (iii) assumptions (context, meaning). Most work on the first dimension, *architecture*, produces a variant of the general hierarchy illustrated below—the hypothesis is that any question can be transformed into a more powerful question by moving up the pyramid.

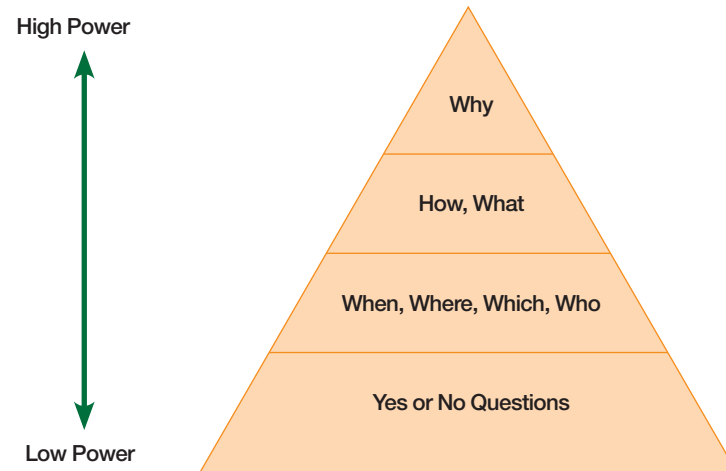
<sup>6</sup> This section and the next draw heavily from Eric Vogt, Juanita Brown, and David Isaacs. 2003. *The Art of Powerful Questions: Catalyzing Insight, Innovation, and Action*. Whole Systems Associates. Available: [www.theworldcafe.com/articles/aopq.pdf](http://www.theworldcafe.com/articles/aopq.pdf)

**Figure 2: A Basic Typology of Questions**

Source: Author.

In other words, the linguistic construction of a question can make a critical difference in either opening our minds or narrowing the possibilities we can consider. Is it a yes or

no question? Is it an either/or question? Does it open with an interrogative, such as when, where, who, how, what, or why?

**Figure 3: The Architecture of a Question**

Source: Author.





**“The trouble with the world is that the stupid are cocksure and the intelligent are full of doubt.”**

—Bertrand Russell

**“It is error only, and not truth, that shrinks from inquiry.”**

—Thomas Paine

- If a question asks “when,” it is inquiring about time or duration.
- If a question asks “where,” it is looking for a location.
- If a question asks “who,” it is soliciting identification.
- If a question asks “how,” it is requesting an instruction or procedure.
- If a question asks “what,” it is inviting a description.
- If a question asks “why,” it is calling for an explanation.

Next, it is important to know that, besides the words we choose, the *scope* of a question affects the effectiveness of a query. Powerful questions, typically beginning with how or why, encompass more people, more resources, more volume, more time, and more concerns. Obviously, the scope of a question must be tailored and kept within realistic boundaries and the needs of an investigation if an answer is to emerge at all, at least in the short term.<sup>7</sup>

Lastly, the *assumptions* that underlie a question comprise a more complex, subtle axis. All questions are nourished by explicit or implicit assumptions that may not be shared by the individuals (or groups) taking part in the discussion. These presuppositions and axioms are taken for granted but have implications and consequences that will flow logically as effects. Assumptions must be surfaced if the question being raised is to display the powerful characteristics mentioned earlier.

## FOSTERING STRATEGIC INQUIRY

In *The Art of Powerful Questions*, Eric Vogt, Juanita Brown, and David Isaacs outlined the steps of a game plan that organizations might follow to use query to catalyze insight, innovation, and action. The game plan involves (i) assessing the current situation, (ii) discovering the big questions, (iii) creating images of possibilities, and (iv) evolving workable strategies. In support, they devised a questionnaire to help judge the degree to which an organization is an inquiring system. (Only when an answer generates further questions does thought continue as inquiry that stimulates new ways to think and new paths to follow.) They also formulated sample questions to focus collective attention on a situation, connect ideas and find deeper insight, and create forward movement. Focusing on effective questioning, they identified the roles that leaders might play to design inquiring systems that co-evolve the future:<sup>8</sup>

- Engage in shared conversation,
- Convene and host learning conversations,
- Include diverse perspectives,
- Support appreciative inquiry,<sup>9</sup>
- Foster shared meaning,
- Nurture communities of practice, and
- Use collaborative technologies. ■

**“A prudent question is one-half of wisdom.”**

—Francis Bacon

<sup>7</sup> The domains that might be embedded in a complex question include mathematics and quantitative disciplines, physical and life sciences, arts and humanities, and social disciplines.

<sup>8</sup> It is not possible to be a good thinker and a poor questioner. With a nod to critical thinking, the intellectual standards that leaders might apply to assess reasoning are (i) clarity, (ii) accuracy, (iii) precision, (iv) relevance, (v) depth, (vi) breadth, (vii) logic, (viii) significance, and (ix) fairness. As they help their organization focus on asking effective questions, the elements of thought that will be implied are (i) what is our fundamental purpose?, (ii) what is the key question we are trying to answer?, (iii) what information do we need to answer our question?, (iv) what is the most basic concept in our question?, (v) what assumptions are we using in our reasoning?, (vi) what is our point of view with respect to the issue?, (vii) what are our most fundamental inferences or conclusions?, and (viii) what are the implications of our reasoning (if we are correct)?

<sup>9</sup> Appreciative inquiry is the process of facilitating positive change in organizations. Its basic assumption is uncomplicated: every organization has something that works well. Appreciative inquiry is usually worked out using a 4-D Cycle of discovery, dream, design, and delivery.

### Box: Is Your Organization an Inquiring System?

- To what degree do leaders in your organization foster an environment in which discovering the “big questions” is encouraged as much as coming up with workable solutions?
- Does your organization have rewards or incentives for members to work across functional boundaries to find challenging questions that create common focus and forward movement for knowledge creation?
- Do your leadership development programs contain as much of a focus on the art and architecture of framing powerful questions as they do on techniques for solving problems?
- Do your organization’s strategic planning processes include structured ways to discover the “big questions” that, if answered, would have real strategic leverage?
- What enabling tools or technologies does your organization employ to “seed” itself with strategic questions that “travel well” and catalyze learning conversations both within and across functions?
- Does your organization use collaborative technology tools to enable people on the frontlines to ask each other questions related to their daily work (i.e., customer service, equipment maintenance) and receive help with these questions from colleagues in other locations?
- Do senior leaders in your organization see the process of strategy evolution as one that engages multiple voices and perspectives in networks of conversation?

Source: Eric Vogt, Juanita Brown, and David Isaacs. 2003. *The Art of Powerful Questions: Catalyzing Insight, Innovation, and Action*. Whole Systems Associates.  
Available: [www.theworldcafe.com/articles/aopq.pdf](http://www.theworldcafe.com/articles/aopq.pdf)

### Table 2: Questions for All Seasons

#### Questions to Focus Collective Attention on a Situation

- What question, if answered, could make the most difference to the future of (our specific situation)?
- What is important to us about (our specific situation) and why do we care?
- What draws us to this inquiry?
- What is our intention here? What is the deeper purpose (the big “why”) that is really worthy of our best effort?
- What opportunities can we see in (our specific situation)?
- What do we know so far or still need to learn about (our specific situation)?
- What are the dilemmas and opportunities in (our specific situation)?
- What assumptions do we need to test or challenge in thinking about (our specific situation)?
- What would someone who had a very different set of beliefs than we do say about (our specific situation)?

#### Questions to Connect Ideas and Find Deeper Insight

- What is taking shape? What are we hearing underneath the variety of opinions being expressed? What is in the center of the table?
- What is emerging here for us? What new connections are we making?
- What had real meaning for us from what we have heard? What has surprised us? What has challenged us?
- What is missing from this picture so far? What is it that we are not seeing? What do we need more clarity about?
- What has been our major learning, insight, or discovery so far?
- What is the next level of thinking we need to evolve to?
- If there was one thing that has not yet been said in order to reach a higher level of understanding and clarity, what would that be?

#### Questions to Create Forward Movement

- What would it take to create change on this issue?
- What could happen that would enable us to feel fully engaged and energized about (our specific situation)?
- What is possible here and who cares? (Rather than “What is wrong here and who is responsible?”)
- What needs our immediate attention to move forward?
- If our success were completely guaranteed, what bold steps might we choose to take?
- How can we support one another in taking the next steps? What unique contribution can we each make?
- What challenges might come our way and how might we meet them?
- What conversation, if begun today, could ripple out in a way that created new possibilities for the future of (our situation)?
- What seed might we plant together today that could make the most difference to the future of (our situation)?

Source: Eric Vogt, Juanita Brown, and David Isaacs. 2003. *The Art of Powerful Questions: Catalyzing Insight, Innovation, and Action*. Whole Systems Associates.  
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# Building Networks of Practice

Organizational boundaries have been stretched, morphed, and redesigned to a degree unimaginable 10 years ago. Networks of practice have come of age. The learning organization pays attention to their forms and functions, evolves principles of engagement, circumscribes and promotes success factors, and monitors and evaluates performance with knowledge performance metrics.



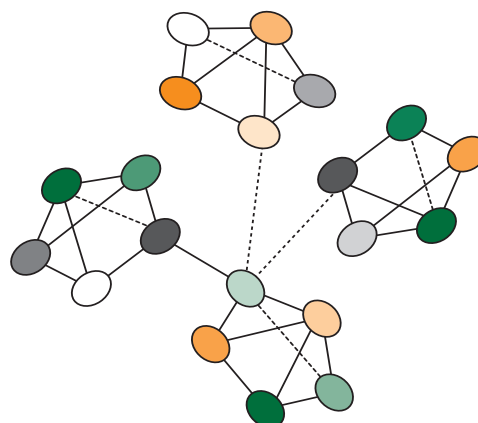
## BACKGROUND

Extensive media coverage of applications such as Facebook, MySpace, and LinkedIn suggests that networks are a new phenomenon. They are not: the first network was born the day people decided to create organizational structures to serve common interests—that is, at the dawn of mankind. However, the last 10–20 years have witnessed rapid intensification and evolution of networking activities, driven of course by information and communication technologies as well as globalization. These make it possible for individuals to exchange data, information, and knowledge; work collaboratively; and share their views much more quickly and widely than ever before. Thus, less and less of an organization's knowledge resides within its formal boundaries or communities of practice.

## RATIONALE

Knowledge cannot be separated from the networks that create, use, and transform it. In parallel, networks now play significant roles in how individuals, groups, organizations, and related systems operate. They will be even more important tomorrow. Since we can no longer assume that closely knit groups are the building blocks of human activity—or treat these as discrete units of analysis—we need to recognize and interface with less-bounded organizations, from non-local communities to links among websites. We should make certain that knowledge harvested in the external environment is integrated with what exists within, especially in dynamic fields where innovation stems from inter-organizational knowledge sharing and learning. Therefore, the structure and composition of nodes and ties,<sup>1</sup> and how these affect norms and determine usefulness,

**Figure: Nodes and Ties in Networks of Practice**



Source: Author.

must become key concerns. This makes the study of networks of practice a prime interest for both researchers and practitioners.

## NETWORKS OF PRACTICE

John Seely Brown and Paul Duguid originated the concept of networks of practice. The notion is related to the work on communities of practice of Jean Lave and Etienne Wenger, and refers to the overall set of informal, emergent networks that facilitate information exchange toward practice-related goals. These networks range from communities of practice where learning occurs to electronic networks of practice (often

<sup>1</sup> Nodes are individuals, groups, or organizations within networks. Ties are the relationships between them.



referred to as virtual or electronic communities).<sup>2</sup> They differ from work groups created through formal organizational mandate with regard to control mechanisms,<sup>3</sup> composition and participation,<sup>4</sup> and expectations about participation.<sup>5</sup> The underlying implication is that, to be competitive, organizations should promote participation in both traditional communities of practice and networks of practice and stimulate interactions between the two.

## BUILDING NETWORKS OF PRACTICE FOR COLLABORATIVE ADVANTAGE<sup>6</sup>

Networks are ordinarily founded on the collaborative hypothesis that we can accomplish more by working together than by working alone. Successful networking delivers collaborative advantage, viz., something that could not have been achieved without the collaboration. In other words, if the underlying premise is that the whole is greater than the sum of the parts, a significant benefit of participating in a knowledge network is that each of the parts also becomes stronger. The rewards can include (i) a better sense of belonging, ownership,

and understanding; (ii) improved outcomes that would not otherwise be attained; and (iii) higher performance and productivity. To draw such benefits, the learning organization pays attention to the forms and functions of networks, evolves principles of engagement, circumscribes and promotes success factors, and monitors and evaluates operations with knowledge performance metrics.

- **The Forms of Networks.** Understanding what knowledge products and services a network offers does not necessarily shed light on how or why it does it. These questions have more to do with its structure. Box 1 delineates the principal features of a network's internal and external environment.
- **The Functions of Networks.** Networks bring together organizational and individual entities that remain geographically separated and institutionally distinct. Driven by technological innovation and globalization, the last 10 years have seen a profound transformation in the wide-ranging functions that they play. Yet, surprisingly little attention has been paid to what these are, and to the strategic development and management implications from that. Box 2 intimates

### Box 1: The Forms of Networks

- **Functions.** What roles and functions does the network carry out, i.e., filtering, amplifying, investing and providing, convening, community-building, and/or learning and facilitating?
- **Governance.** What are the behaviors and processes in place within the network that govern its short- and long-term functioning?
- **Localization and Scope.** Where are the network and its members located both physically and thematically?
- **Membership.** Who are the network's members and how are they related to each other?
- **Capacity and Skill.** Does the network, including its members, have the capacity and skills necessary to carry out its functions?
- **Resources.** Does the network have access to the inputs necessary to its functioning?
- **Communications.** Does the network have appropriate communication strategies to carry out its functions, thus amplifying messages outwardly or sharing messages and information within the institution?
- **External Environment.** What are the external influences affecting the network?
- **Strategic and Adaptive Capacity.** Is the network capable of managing changes and shocks in its internal and external environment? Can it manage those changes on its own or does it depend on others, e.g., partners, networks, donors?

Source: Adapted from Ben Ramalingam, Enrique Mendizabal, and Ed Schenkenberg van Mierop. 2008. Strengthening Humanitarian Networks: Applying the Network Functions Approach. *ODI Background Note*. Overseas Development Institute. Available: [www.odi.org.uk/publications/background-notes/2008/humanitarian-network-functions-approach.pdf](http://www.odi.org.uk/publications/background-notes/2008/humanitarian-network-functions-approach.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> Clearly, the distinction between formality and informality can be tenuous. Some organizations have cultivated communities of practice to integrate them into their strategies (which might test the loyalties of members). If communities of practice are a localized and specialized subset of networks of practice, typically consisting of like-minded individuals who coordinate, communicate, and reciprocate in a shared domain in face-to-face situations and to a high degree on implicit knowledge, they can be considered to lie at one end of a continuum of network forms. At the other lie electronic networks of practice, the members of which may never know one another or meet face-to-face and display relatively little reciprocity (they generally communicate through electronic mailing lists, bulletin boards, newsletters, or web logs).

<sup>3</sup> In formal work groups such as project teams, control mechanisms customarily involve organizational hierarchies, mandated rules, contractual obligations, and both cash and noncash awards.

<sup>4</sup> The composition of networks of practice may range from a few individuals to very large, open electronic communities numbering thousands of participants. In the latter case, no formal restrictions are placed on membership. In contrast, the members of work groups are formally designated and assigned.

<sup>5</sup> In work groups, participation is determined jointly. Members are expected to commit to a common purpose and reach agreement on specific performance targets and indicators, a working approach, and mutual accountability. In communities of practice, participation is also determined jointly but individuals seek knowledge identified experts. In electronic networks of practice, participation is determined individually; knowledge seekers have no control over who responds to their queries. In turn, knowledge contributors have no assurances that the knowledge seekers will understand the answers they gave or reciprocate the favor.

<sup>6</sup> This section draws heavily on resources of the Overseas Development Institute and other organizations. Their insights are acknowledged with thanks in each instance.

that networks can fulfill six, nonexclusive functions.<sup>7</sup> (The six can be further segregated into supra-functions, namely, agency or support.)<sup>8</sup>

- **Steps to Applying the Network Functions Approach.** The six functions of networks can be examined in a structured, step-by-step process to confirm, rethink, or reshape the work of an existing network. Box 3 lists six steps to help those facilitating, acting within, or supporting networks reflect on their activities and frame them in a more struc-

tured and strategic fashion. The steps can clarify thinking, hone strategies, sharpen activities and, ultimately, improve performance, thus delivering greater value. (The approach can also be used to guide the design of a new network.)

- **Principles of Engagement.** Networks are not magic bullets. They can do what they were designed to do, but to adopt new functions they need long-term investments. Box 4 suggests principles that decision makers should consider to build them further. Box 5 identifies some keys to success.

## Box 2: The Functions of Networks

- **Filtering.** Organizing and managing information that is worth paying attention to.
- **Amplifying.** Taking new, little-known, or little-understood ideas, giving them weight, and making them more widely understood.
- **Investing and Providing.** Offering a means to give members the resources they need to carry out their main activities.
- **Convening.** Bringing together different, distinct people or groups of people.
- **Community-Building.** Promoting and sustaining the values and standards of individuals or organizations.
- **Learning and Facilitating.** Helping members carry out their activities more efficiently and effectively.

Source: Adapted from Ben Ramalingam, Enrique Mendizabal, and Ed Schenkenberg van Mierop. 2008. Strengthening Humanitarian Networks: Applying the Network Functions Approach. *ODI Background Note*. Overseas Development Institute. Available: [www.odl.org.uk/publications/background-notes/2008/humanitarian-network-functions-approach.pdf](http://www.odl.org.uk/publications/background-notes/2008/humanitarian-network-functions-approach.pdf)

## Box 3: Steps to Applying the Network Functions Approach

- **Step 1.** Analyze the relevance of the network's vision and mission.
- **Step 2.** Map existing and planned activities against the six functions.
- **Step 3.** Identify the current and planned balance of effort across the six functions.
- **Step 4.** For each function, identify how the network's role is balanced between "agency" or "support."
- **Step 5.** Rate efficiency and effectiveness.
- **Step 6.** Reflect on the vision and mission.

Source: Developed from Ben Ramalingam, Enrique Mendizabal, and Ed Schenkenberg van Mierop. 2008. Strengthening Humanitarian Networks: Applying the Network Functions Approach. *ODI Background Note*. Overseas Development Institute. Available: [www.odl.org.uk/publications/background-notes/2008/humanitarian-network-functions-approach.pdf](http://www.odl.org.uk/publications/background-notes/2008/humanitarian-network-functions-approach.pdf)

## Box 4: Supporting Networks: Ten Principles

- Networks are complex. There are no templates for success, and one should expect setbacks.
- Work with networks to agree on their functional balance and support that balance.
- Interventions to develop a network cannot be conceptualized as projects driven by a "logical framework"—other approaches, such as outcome mapping, can provide a better alternative.
- Support networks to function as networks with and through their members rather than to deliver specific services that could be delivered by their members or other types of organizations.
- Do not treat networks as traditional nongovernment or civil society organizations, and do not allow funds to undermine community-building functions.
- When networks carry out a funding role, ensure they have the necessary skills and that other functions are not affected.
- Network support time frames should take into consideration the different stages of network development.
- Appropriate support for the network and its members to develop the right competencies and skills to collaborate.
- A culture of knowledge and learning is a cornerstone of network development.
- Sustainability should be judged against the need of the members of the network.

Source: Adapted from Enrique Mendizabal. 2008. Supporting Networks: Ten Principles. *ODI Opinion*. Overseas Development Institute. Available: [www.odl.org.uk/publications/opinions/105-enrique-mendizabal-supporting-networks.pdf](http://www.odl.org.uk/publications/opinions/105-enrique-mendizabal-supporting-networks.pdf)

<sup>7</sup> Networks can carry out one or more of these functions simultaneously—and many activities would fall under more than one category—but one must also recognize that there are important trade-offs between them. Each function requires specific capacities and skills, resources, and systems: overlooking trade-offs can drive networks away from their original roles.

<sup>8</sup> An agency bears responsibility for pursuing a particular change in policy or practice. A supporting role is one in which agency itself remains with the members: the organization exists to support them. In reality, of course, networks endeavor to conduct both functions to at least some degree.



### Box 5: What Networks Need to Do: Some Keys to Success

- **Clear governance agreements.** Networks need clear governance agreements to set objectives, identify functions, define membership structures, make decisions, and resolve conflicts.
- **Strength in numbers.** The larger the numbers involved the greater the political weight that will be given to networks.
- **Representativeness.** Representativeness is one key source of legitimacy and thereby influence.
- **Quality of evidence.** The quality of knowledge products and services affects both the credibility and legitimacy of arguments.
- **Packaging of evidence.** Good packaging of knowledge products is central to effective communication.
- **Persistence.** Influence often requires sustained pressure over a long period.
- **Membership of key individuals.** The membership of influential figures in the policy arena will strengthen networks.
- **Making use of informal links.** Informal links are critical to achieving many network objectives.
- **Complementing official structures.** By their nature, networks add most value when they complement, rather than duplicate, official structures.
- **Good use of information and communications technology and other networking opportunities.** Information and communications technologies are opening up great potential for knowledge networking.

Source: Adapted from Julius Court and Enrique Mendizabal. 2005. Networks and Policy Influence in International Development. *Euforic E-newsletter*. Available: [www.euforic.org/docs/200505241513335135.pdf](http://www.euforic.org/docs/200505241513335135.pdf)

- **Tools for Monitoring and Evaluation.** Just like any other system, networks stand to benefit from feedback. Put simply, they need to be evaluated from two perspectives: the effectiveness of the network (doing the right thing) and the efficiency of the network (doing things right). Techniques that lend themselves to monitoring and evaluation of networks include SWOT analysis (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats); results-based management; logical framework analysis; outcome mapping; and appreciative inquiry. Since networks are about relationships, it is

also pertinent to leverage evaluation methods from the human resources field. Table 1 presents a simple network assessment tool based on the four common design principles of structure, context, support infrastructure, and delivery. Table 2 lists several criteria by means of which knowledge sharing programs and activities might be assessed. Table 3 suggests metrics with which to measure the use of the collaboration platforms that electronic and other networks often rely on. Boxes 6–7 illustrate a sample process for network assessment and a sample interview protocol.

**Table 1: Network Assessment Tool**

	Agree	Unsure	Disagree
The network has a clear purpose and direction.			
The network has a realistic timetable for delivery.			
The network members understand and are committed to improvement.			
The network is widely inclusive both in the range of disciplines involved and their seniority.			
Network members demonstrate trust, respect, and mutual support.			
Network members are supported by their host organizations.			
Members access and use technology appropriately to support their networking activities.			
There are clear channels of communication between team members.			
Network members share their learning with others.			
Network members ask each other for support and receive it.			
The network delivers success and demonstrates it.			

Source: Adapted from Department of Health of the United Kingdom. 2009. *Designing Networks for Collaborative Advantage*.



**Table 2: Evaluation Framework for Knowledge-Sharing Programs and Activities—Criteria, Indicators, and Evidence**

Criteria	Indicators (illustrative)	Evidence (illustrative)
Relevance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Programs and activities anchored in corporate and country priorities</li> <li>Programs and activities built on ADB comparative advantage</li> <li>Institutional support aligned with knowledge-sharing strategy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Knowledge-sharing strategic objectives, including client and audience, well defined and linked to corporate, country, sector, and thematic strategies, and core business processes</li> </ul>
Quality and Timeliness of Knowledge Products and Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Aggregated knowledge is tailored and timed to client needs, clearly presented, technically sound, and state-of-the-art</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Staff, client, and expert reviews and surveys</li> <li>ADB content management processes</li> </ul>
Accessibility and Reach of Tacit and Codified Knowledge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Intended users/clients have ready access to up-to-date knowledge and expertise needed to do their jobs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Dissemination tracking, usability testing, usage monitoring of published and on-line knowledge and information and knowledge services</li> <li>Staff, client participation in knowledge sharing events</li> <li>Staff, client feedback surveys, focus groups, reviews</li> </ul>
Utility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Knowledge products and knowledge-sharing activities incorporated into core business processes</li> <li>Shared knowledge adapted and applied by clients in policies, programs, and institutional developments</li> <li>Lessons learned and good practices captured and feedback to ADB and client</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Knowledge strategy articulated in country partnership strategies and operations</li> <li>Knowledge products and activities built into staff and client (team) learning activities</li> <li>Staff and client feedback surveys</li> <li>Program and activity self-assessments</li> <li>Self- and independent assessments of knowledge-sharing process in country assistance programs, and lending and nonlending services</li> </ul>
Likely Impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ADB and client knowledge bases and capacities enhanced</li> <li>Targeted improvements in ADB portfolio performance</li> <li>Interim and longer-term development objectives achieved</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ongoing knowledge assessments</li> <li>Self- and independent assessments of program and activity outcomes relative to stated objectives</li> </ul>
Cost Effectiveness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Programs and activities carried out without more resources than necessary to achieve objectives</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tracking and benchmarking of the costs of programs or activities</li> </ul>

Source: Adapted from The World Bank. 2003. *Sharing Knowledge: Innovations and Remaining Challenges*. Washington, DC. Available: [http://lnweb90.worldbank.org/oed/oeddoclib.nsf/DocUNIDViewForJavaSearch/F3A114765B80EB1585256DBB006AFB1E/\\$file/knowledge\\_evaluation.pdf](http://lnweb90.worldbank.org/oed/oeddoclib.nsf/DocUNIDViewForJavaSearch/F3A114765B80EB1585256DBB006AFB1E/$file/knowledge_evaluation.pdf)

**Table 3: Knowledge Performance Metrics by Knowledge Management Tool**

Knowledge Management Initiative	System Measure	Output Measure	Outcome Measure
Best Practice Directory	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Number of downloads</li> <li>Dwell time</li> <li>Usability survey</li> <li>Number of users</li> <li>Total number of contributions</li> <li>Contribution rate over time</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Usefulness survey</li> <li>Anecdotes</li> <li>User ratings of contribution value</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Time, money, or personnel time saved by implementing best practice</li> <li>Number of groups certified in the use of the best practice</li> <li>Rate of change in operating costs</li> </ul>
Lessons Learned Database	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Number of downloads</li> <li>Dwell time</li> <li>Usability survey</li> <li>Number of users</li> <li>Total number of contributions</li> <li>Contribution rate over time</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Time to solve problems</li> <li>Usefulness survey</li> <li>Anecdotes</li> <li>User ratings of contribution value</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Time, money, or personnel time saved by applying lessons learned from others</li> <li>Rate of change in operating costs</li> </ul>

*continued on next page*



Table 3 continued

Knowledge Management Initiative	System Measure	Output Measure	Outcome Measure
Communities of Practice or Special Interest Groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Number of contributions</li> <li>Frequency of update</li> <li>Number of members</li> <li>Ratio of the number of members to the number of contributors (conversion rate)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Number of apprentices mentored by colleagues</li> <li>Number of problems solved</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Savings or improvement in organizational quality and efficiency</li> <li>Captured organizational memory</li> <li>Attrition rate of community members versus nonmember cohort</li> </ul>
Expert or Expertise Directory	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Number of site accesses</li> <li>Frequency of use</li> <li>Number of contributions</li> <li>Contribution/update rate over time</li> <li>Navigation path analysis</li> <li>Number of help desk calls</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Time to solve problems</li> <li>Number of problems solved</li> <li>Time to find expert</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Savings or improvement in organizational quality and efficiency</li> <li>Time, money, or personnel time saved by leveraging expert knowledge or expertise database</li> </ul>
Portal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Searching precision and recall</li> <li>Dwell time</li> <li>Latency</li> <li>Usability survey</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Common awareness within teams</li> <li>Time spent gathering information</li> <li>Time spent analyzing information</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Time, money, or personnel time saved as a result of portal use</li> <li>Reduced training time or learning curve as a result of single access to multiple information sources</li> <li>Customer satisfaction (based on the value of self service or improved ability for employees to respond to customer needs)</li> </ul>
Lead Tracking System	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Number of contributions</li> <li>Frequency of update</li> <li>Number of users</li> <li>Frequency of use</li> <li>Navigation path analysis</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Number of successful leads</li> <li>Number of new customers and value from these customers</li> <li>Value of new work from existing customers</li> <li>Proposal response times</li> <li>Proposal win rates</li> <li>Percentage of business developers who report finding value in the use of the system</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Revenue and overhead costs</li> <li>Customer demographics</li> <li>Cost and time to produce proposals</li> <li>Alignment of programs with strategic plans</li> </ul>
Collaborative Systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Latency during collaborative process</li> <li>Number of users</li> <li>Number of patents/trademarks produced</li> <li>Number of articles published plus number of conference presentations per employee</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Number of programs or projects collaborated on</li> <li>Time lost due to program delays</li> <li>Number of new products developed</li> <li>Value of sales from products created in the last 3–5 years (a measure of innovation)</li> <li>Average learning curve per employee</li> <li>Proposal response times</li> <li>Proposal win rates</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reduced cost of product development, acquisition, or maintenance</li> <li>Reduction in the number of program delays</li> <li>Faster response to proposals</li> <li>Reduced learning curve for new employees</li> </ul>
Yellow Pages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Number of users</li> <li>Frequency of use</li> <li>Latency</li> <li>Searching precision and recall</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Time to find people</li> <li>Time to solve problems</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Time, money, or personnel time saved as a result of the use of Yellow Pages</li> <li>Savings or improvement in organizational quality and efficiency</li> </ul>
e-Learning Systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Latency</li> <li>Number of users</li> <li>Number of courses taken per user</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Training costs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Savings or improvement in organizational quality and efficiency</li> <li>Improved employee satisfaction</li> <li>Reduced cost of training</li> <li>Reduced learning curve for new employees</li> </ul>

Source: US Department of the Navy. 2001. *Metrics Guide for Knowledge Management Initiatives*. Available: <http://cloud.snappages.com/b8898dc2c08e137d03449de65b9e82e108c15658/metricsguide.pdf>

## Box 6: Sample Process for Network Assessment

- **Member consultation.** Preliminary information on the reason for the assessment (is it self-directed or conducted by an external consultant; is it being done at the request of members; or coordinators; or donors?); discussion with members on what the goals and objectives of the assessment should be; request for relevant documentation.
- **Documentation review.** The method in which the network creates proposals and reports to its donors. How minutes of network meetings and conference calls are conducted. How contracts with members, describing activities to be undertaken as part of receiving funding for participating in the network. This includes workshop reports, MOUs, and governance agreements.
- **Interview protocol with individual members.** A sample interview protocol is appended. Questions are framed to elicit from members signs of changes in research capacity; relationships with decision makers, with other network members; and other changes resulting from their participation in the network.
- **Interview protocol with people/organizations identified as those the network is seeking to influence.** A sample interview protocol is appended. Questions are framed to elicit indications of whether the network's knowledge products and services were relevant to the needs of those people/organizations; how they engaged with the network.
- **Network meeting plenary session discussion: locating energy for change.** An Appreciative Inquiry approach orients the assessment process towards positive experiences: what is working, what has provided excitement, enrichment, information to one's action — the premise being that when one focuses on the sources of energy within a group of individuals, the problems become less challenging, or less important. At a network meeting, in plenary, members are asked to share their thoughts and stories: (i) Describe the best experience you had with the network: when did you feel most excited about the network; when did you feel you accomplished something valuable as a result of being part of the network?; (ii) What did you value the most about the network?
- **Draft review of assessment and recommendations.** This should be circulated to all members for comment, verification of findings.
- **Assessment report work plan for response to recommendations.** The report should not be the end of the assessment. Part of the assessment process should include the development of the work plan for the next phase of the network.

Source: Adapted from International Institute for Sustainable Development. 2004. *Knowledge Networks: Guidelines for Assessment*. Canada. Available: [www.iisd.org/pdf/2004/networks\\_guidelines\\_for\\_assessment.pdf](http://www.iisd.org/pdf/2004/networks_guidelines_for_assessment.pdf)

## Box 7: Sample Interview Protocol with Network Members

### A. Network Effectiveness

What did you hope to accomplish through the network? *Prompts:*

- To increase understanding: Identification of a priority issue for your country/region; contribution to research on a priority issue?
- To have influence: on national (or international) policy agenda?
- To build relationships: create a broader coalition of interest and support for priority issue?
- Others

What did you hope to gain by participating in the network? *Prompts:*

- To gain access to other experts, to information?
- To increase influence and reputation of your own organization nationally, internationally?
- Others

What did you want to contribute to the network? *Prompts:*

- Your knowledge and expertise?
- Access to your own communications vehicles?
- Others

Who did you most want to influence through participating in the network? *Prompts:*

- Local decision makers in different sectors?
- Your own organization?
- Other network members?
- Others outside the network?

What do you think has changed as an outcome of your participation in the network? *Prompts:*

- In your own research?
- In your interactions with local decision makers?
- In your relationships with other network members?
- In levels of awareness and understanding nationally and internationally of the issues the network is addressing?
- Others

*continued on next page*



Box 7 continued

**B. Network Efficiency**

What is working well in the network and should be continued? What did not work well and should be improved or discontinued? *Prompts:*

- Interaction with members (internal communications)?
- Use of the network's website (external communications)?

Did you have good support from your own institution for your work in the network? How did you integrate the work of your network into the rest of your institution's work?

Were the systems and procedures of the network satisfactory? *Prompts:*

- Contracts?
- Financial support?
- Correspondence, listserv, meetings?
- Interaction with coordinators?

Source: Adapted from International Institute for Sustainable Development. 2004. *Knowledge Networks: Guidelines for Assessment*. Canada. Available: [www.iisd.org/pdf/2004/networks\\_guidelines\\_for\\_assessment.pdf](http://www.iisd.org/pdf/2004/networks_guidelines_for_assessment.pdf)

**Box 8: Sample Interview Protocol for Those the Network Seeks to Influence**

Is the person familiar with the network or with individual members of the network?

- What is their perception of the network's role or contribution to the issues on which it is working?
- What has the network accomplished or produced that the person thinks stands out? (prompt for workshops, conference presentations, research reports, e-mail lists, websites, etc.)

What were the major processes or agendas that the network was or should have been active in to promote their knowledge and advice?

- What knowledge products and services has the network developed that related specifically to those processes and agendas?
- What value has the network added to the debate?

Was the network's knowledge timely?

- Was the network too far ahead of the agenda?
- Was the information relevant to issues of immediate importance to its constituents?
- Has the decision maker more/better information/intelligence than he or she had before?

Does the network have a good understanding of who its "constituents" are?

- Who are the key people who should receive their information?
- Who are the "connectors," who in turn could influence key people?
- Has the network built relationships with the right people?

What communications strategies did the network use?

- How did the person being interviewed find out about the network; how has he or she received key research products; were they e-mailed to him or her; did they receive notification from a listserv or a secondary source; how do they use the network's website, etc.

Were the research products in a format useful to the person?

Was the content credible, reliable?

Is this an issue on which the network is recognized as expert?

Where is the network positioned vis-à-vis other actors in this field?

- Was there a non-network publication or organization that they found particularly useful; how does it compare to the network?
- Has the network identified an appropriate niche for itself?

Source: Adapted from International Institute for Sustainable Development. 2004. *Knowledge Networks: Guidelines for Assessment*. Canada. Available: [www.iisd.org/pdf/2004/networks\\_guidelines\\_for\\_assessment.pdf](http://www.iisd.org/pdf/2004/networks_guidelines_for_assessment.pdf)

## SUMMING UP

Networks are an important alternative for individuals, groups, organization trying to influence practice. (Indeed, some prophesy that they will become the pre-eminent collaboration mechanism. Certainly, the new information and communication technologies are well suited to support, develop, and even strengthen them.) However, surprisingly little has been written on their strategic development and management, and even less is known about how capacity can be built. Still, rich seams of investigation relate to their forms and functions, key elements of which relate to the external context in which networks are set out and the interests of their members. Work in these areas provides a natural entry point for thinking about the resources, capacities, and skills that networks can offer or might need to develop. Moreover, since networks exist for a purpose, there surely is interest also in their use of evidence to influence practice, and ways to improve that. Lastly, more research is needed on simple but effective means to evaluate performance. ■

## FURTHER READING

Ben Ramalingam, Enrique Mendizabal, and Ed Schenkenberg van Mierop. 2008. Strengthening Humanitarian Networks: Applying the Network Functions Approach. *ODI Background Note*. Overseas Development Institute. Available: [www.odi.org.uk/publications/background-notes/2008/humanitarian-network-functions-approach.pdf](http://www.odi.org.uk/publications/background-notes/2008/humanitarian-network-functions-approach.pdf)

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### KNOWLEDGE SHARING AND LEARNING

Two-way communications that take place simply and effectively build knowledge.



# Coaching and Mentoring

Coaching and mentoring can inspire and empower employees, build commitment, increase productivity, grow talent, and promote success. They are now essential elements of modern managerial practice. However, many companies still have not established related schemes. By not doing so, they also fail to capitalize on the experience and knowledge seasoned personnel can pass on.



## RATIONALE

High-performance, contemporary organizations know that a company is only as good as its employees. They place strong emphasis on personal attributes in selecting and developing staff. However, this does not come without challenges, not least of which may be (significant) gaps in the experience, knowledge, attitudes, skills, aspirations, behaviors, or leadership required to perform demanding jobs. Formal training courses may vaunt wholesale transfer of these; but employees will not likely stretch to their full potential without dedicated guidance that inspires, energizes, and facilitates. In the new millennium,<sup>1</sup> good coaching and mentoring schemes are deemed a highly effective way to help people, through talking, increase self-direction, self-esteem, efficacy, and accomplishments.

**“To live is to change, and to be perfect is to have changed often.”**

—John Henry Newman

## DEFINITION

Both coaching and mentoring are an approach to management and a set of skills to nurture staff and deliver results. They are, fundamentally, learning and development activities that share similar roots despite lively debate among academics and practitioners as to the meaning (and implications) of each word.<sup>2</sup> A good coach will also mentor and a good mentor will coach too, as appropriate to the situation and the relationship. Hence, these *Knowledge Solutions*, which relate to individuals, treat the two terms interchangeably: both are related processes for analysis, reflection, and action, intended to enable employees achieve their full potential with a focus on skills, performance, and “life” (personal) coaching and mentoring.<sup>3</sup> (A substantial side effect of investments to bring out potential is that organizations will enable seasoned personnel to delegate more and supervise less.)<sup>4</sup> Unlike conventional training, coaching and mentoring concentrate on the person, not the subject; they draw out rather than put in; they develop rather than impose; they reflect rather than direct; they are continuous—not one-time—events. In brief, they are a form of change facilitation.

<sup>1</sup> The 1990s saw the rapid emergence of coaching as an identifiable industry.

<sup>2</sup> Differences of opinion have been fueled by the wide range of contexts in which coaching and mentoring take place; by the perceptions of stakeholders as to the purpose of related conversations; by resulting variations in the application of coaching and mentoring activities; and by not counting commercial, practical, and ethical considerations. Somewhat elitist definitions have it that coaching means encouraging employees to do their jobs well, while mentoring is about helping top performers excel. (The people performance potential model that categorizes teams and organizations, not individuals, as icebergs, problem children, backbone, and stars is an accepted extension of this approach.) From there, the two camps specify that the attributes of each activity can be distinguished according to focus, role, relationship, source of influence, personal returns, and arena. The psychologically minded, on the other hand, have viewed coaching and mentoring as adjuncts to therapy. (Attempting to fix poor performance is termed counseling.) Possibly, the main distinction one might make in differentiating coaching from mentoring is that the former does not necessarily rely on the specific experience and knowledge of the coach being greater than that of the client, and may emphasize cross-disciplinary skills. Also, mentoring usually refers to one-on-one relationships, whereas coaching can target both individuals and teams.

<sup>3</sup> The moral is that it is essential to first determine exactly what the needs are to make sure that the mentor coach can supply the type and level of service required, whatever that service might be called. Clearly, one size does not fit all: to profile needs (without being distracted by details), it is important to look at demographic, motivating, and learning factors; the subject's background; and his or her availability.

<sup>4</sup> Mentor coaches draw benefits too. Coaching and mentoring help develop leadership and communications skills, and learn new perspectives and ways of thinking. Significantly, good mentor coaches are never motivated entirely by money: personal development is a very important aspect of what is a two-way process.

## APPLICATIONS

Coaching and mentoring can be used whenever performance or motivation levels must be increased. There are many applications, each to be looked at from as many points of view as possible. Recurring opportunities relate to developing careers, solving problems, overcoming conflicts, and remotivating staff. In all instances, feedback should be specific, factual, and objective. (Ideally, the final stage of a coaching and mentoring cycle should form a platform from which to initiate another, with a view to long-term learning and development.)

*And therein we find the secret to Peter Drucker: He had a remarkable ability not just to give the right answers, but more important, to ask the right questions—questions that would shift our entire frame of reference. Throughout his work runs a theme that highlights a fundamental shift, away from achievement—jettisoning with the flick of his hand, as if he were waving away an irritating gnat, any consideration of the question of what you can “get” in this world—to the question of contribution. Drucker’s relentless discipline to say “no thank you” to invitations and inquiries stemmed from thinking always about how he could best contribute with his one lifetime.*

Source: Excerpted from Jim Collins. 2005. Lessons From A Student Of Life. *Business Week*. 28 November. Available: [www.businessweek.com/magazine/content/05\\_48/b3961007.htm](http://www.businessweek.com/magazine/content/05_48/b3961007.htm)

**Figure 1: Structured Coaching and Mentoring**



Source: Author.

**Table: Deciding When and How to Coach and Mentor**

Reason to Coach and Mentor	Actions to Take
<b>Building Skills:</b> Set up opportunities for new skills to be learned and practiced.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use coaching and mentoring to break up large-scale tasks into smaller ones, gradually introducing new skills.</li> <li>Before selecting a training program, coach and mentor your staff to identify performance targets they want to achieve.</li> </ul>
<b>Progressing Projects:</b> Oversee progress and monitor any problems on projects.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Link coaching and mentoring sessions with progress reports over the life of the project.</li> <li>Work through problems that could hinder the successful completion of the project.</li> </ul>
<b>Developing Careers:</b> Prepare staff for promotion or show them a clear career path.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work on coaching and mentoring goals that could result in recognition for staff achievements.</li> <li>Focus on long-term projects that are challenging and bring out potential, rather than small-scale jobs.</li> </ul>
<b>Solving Problems:</b> Help staff to identify problems and possible routes to a solution.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Encourage staff to define the problem and to come up with their own route to a solution.</li> <li>Remain sympathetic to your staff’s difficulties, while encouraging them to deal with problems robustly.</li> </ul>
<b>Brainstorming:</b> Direct the creative input of the team to keep projects on track.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Accentuate the generation of creative options rather than getting bogged down in problems.</li> <li>In team coaching and mentoring, take a lead by offering creative ideas of your own, and then invite the team to assess them.</li> </ul>
<b>Overcoming Conflicts:</b> Diffuse disagreements among team members.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Coach and mentor staff to develop greater insights into others’ perspectives and therefore avoid misunderstandings.</li> </ul>
<b>Remotivating Staff:</b> Restore enthusiasm and commitment within the team.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establish people’s needs and aspirations and link these to performance targets.</li> <li>Be prepared to dig for the issues that really concern the employee and be ready to talk them through.</li> </ul>

Source: Adapted from John Eaton and Roy Johnson. 2001. *Coaching Successfully*. Dorling Kindersley Limited.





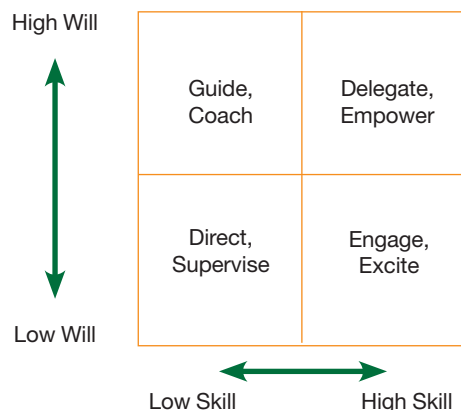
## PROCESS

For any single coaching and mentoring goal there is a cycle of six basic stages, each of which hinges on effective questioning, active listening, clear feedback, and well-organized sessions. First, the mentor coach and the client get to know one another to establish clarity and rapport, engage, and agree what the goal is;<sup>5</sup> second, they discuss the current reality, to which the mentor coach will adapt the coaching and mentoring style;<sup>6</sup> third, they explore available options; fourth, they identify and commit to a course of action (at a pace the client is comfortable with) in line with shared expectations (that might involve training); fifth, the client implements the agreed actions with the support of and clear (meaning constructive and positive) feedback from the coach; sixth, the mentor coach and the client consider what has been learned and how they might build on that knowledge, possibly by initiating a new coaching and mentoring cycle. All the while, the mentor coach should, with empathy and sensitivity, encourage the client to come to his or her own conclusions. Mentor coaches must have a high degree of emotional intelligence, viz., self-awareness, self-regulation, self-motivation, social awareness, and social skills.<sup>7</sup> This is essential to achieving a good relationship that combines autonomy and shared responsibility toward accomplishment of the performance goal. Last but not least, everything that is said must remain confidential.

## APPRAISING

The purpose of appraisal is to identify accomplishments and make sure new performance goals are realistic. Appraisal will call for a joint review and a development plan. The joint review should cover (i) the last period's objectives, (ii) examples of achievements, (iii) the client's self-rating, (iv) the mentor coach's appreciation, (v) the next period's objectives, and (vi) the client's comments on these. The development plan should specify (i) the long-term objectives, (ii) immediate objectives, (iii) the competencies required, (iv) training needs (if any), (v) the actions agreed, and (vi) the review date agreed.

**Figure 2: The Skill–Will Matrix**



Source: Adapted from Max Landsberg. 1996. *The Tao of Coaching: Boost Your Effectiveness at Work by Inspiring and Developing Those Around You*. HarperCollins.

**“I don’t know any other way to lead but by example.”**

—Don Shula

## EVALUATING

Evaluation determines merit or worth, assesses impact, identifies improvements, and provides accountability. When assessing coaching and mentoring programs, five critical levels of performance, for which data and information must be gathered and analyzed, apply:

- Level 1: reaction (did the clients like the interventions?)
- Level 2: learning and development (did the clients benefit as planned?)
- Level 3: organizational support (did the clients receive the institutional support needed?)

<sup>5</sup> Goal setting forms the crux of coaching and mentoring, springing from a sound diagnosis of the capabilities and attitudes of the client. The smart goals agreed from there are specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and timed.

<sup>6</sup> Coaching and mentoring styles typically lie within a skill–will matrix. Skill depends on experience, training, understanding, and role perception. Will depends on desire to achieve, incentives, security, and confidence. Coaching and mentoring styles should vary in accordance with a client's endowment of each.

<sup>7</sup> Not everyone can be a mentor coach. Even if emotional intelligence skills can be learned, some are more naturally gifted with “people” skills than others. Before committing, would-be practitioners should ask themselves: Do I enjoy encouraging and motivating others? Do I want to contribute to the growth and success of others? Do I want to share my experience and knowledge with others? What specific expertise can I claim and offer? In what areas am I willing to help? Am I comfortable with posing challenging questions? Am I prepared to regularly invest time and energy in coaching and mentoring? What is my preferred duration for a partnership? What is my preferred frequency and method of contact? What type of client would I prefer to coach and mentor? Can I describe the professional and personal qualities of that client? Do I want to coach and mentor someone from the same profession or the same career path? How would coaching and mentoring add to my sense of contribution and community? How would coaching and mentoring contribute to my own goals? Are there any areas that I do not want to visit?

- Level 4: behavior (do the clients apply their learning and new competencies in the workplace)
- Level 5: results (what is the impact on the organization?)

**“The miracle, or the power, that elevates the few is to be found in their industry, application, and perseverance under the prompting of a brave, determined spirit.”**

— Mark Twain

## AFTERWORD

All development is self-development. One cannot force employees to develop: they must want that themselves.<sup>8</sup> Nonetheless, what an organization can do is to help set an environment that makes it more likely its staff will want to learn, grow, and succeed. ■

*Yet when asked to spend time with an unknown and unproven young man seeking his way in the world, Drucker freely gave the better part of a day to mentor and give guidance. I had the honor of writing about that day in the foreword to “The Daily Drucker,” wherein I recount how Drucker altered the trajectory of my life by framing our discussion around one simple question: “What do you want to contribute?”*

Source: Excerpted from Jim Collins. 2005. Lessons From A Student Of Life. *Business Week*. 28 November. Available: [www.businessweek.com/magazine/content/05\\_48/b3961007.htm](http://www.businessweek.com/magazine/content/05_48/b3961007.htm)

## FURTHER READING

John Eaton and Roy Johnson. 2001. *Coaching Successfully*. Dorling Kindersley Limited.

<sup>8</sup> The conscious competence learning model, for instance, takes a learner from stage 1 (unconscious incompetence) to stage 4 (unconscious competence), having passed through stage 2 (conscious incompetence) and stage 3 (conscious competence). Yet, some will resist progression even to stage 2 because they refuse to acknowledge or accept the relevance and benefit of a particular skill or ability.



### KNOWLEDGE SHARING AND LEARNING

Two-way communications that take place simply and effectively build knowledge.



# Conducting After-Action Reviews and Retrospects

Organizational learning calls for nonstop assessment of performance—its successes and failures. This makes sure that learning takes place and supports continuous improvement. After-action reviews and retrospects are a tool that facilitates assessments; they enable this by bringing together a team to discuss an activity or project openly and honestly.



## RATIONALE

Exit interviews are a way to capture knowledge from leavers. Peer assists are about teams asking for help for the benefit of their members. They are about “learning before doing.” But continuously assessing organizational performance to meet or exceed expectations requires also that one obtain feedback and understand what happened (or did not happen) during an activity or project, or soon after completion. After-action reviews are about “learning while doing;” they identify how to correct shortcomings and sustain accomplishments. Retrospects are about “learning after doing;” they capture the new knowledge acquired after the fact.<sup>1</sup> In both instances, knowledge gleaned from and compiled by those closest to the review can be used to improve results and can be shared with others who are planning, developing, implementing, and evaluating similar efforts.

## DEFINITION

After-action reviews are a leadership and knowledge-sharing tool, which bring together the team that is closest to the activity or project, when a critical milestone has been reached, to discuss successes and failures in an open and honest fashion. The purpose is to learn from the experience and take the lessons learned into the next phase of the activity or project, or to accomplish related tasks more effectively the next time a similar activity or project is conducted. After-action reviews and retrospects are linked conceptually. The difference lies in the degree of detail and the formality applied to the process of conducting them.

## BENEFITS

When administered in a climate of openness, candid discussion, clarity, and commitment to identifying and recommending solutions, after-action reviews and retrospects yield many benefits. The participants in the review, e.g., managers, leaders, and those planning to pursue a similar activity or project in the future, will understand more clearly what was originally intended, what transpired and why, as well as what might be done better and how. The number of subsequent repeats of mistakes or missteps will decrease. Furthermore, reports from after-action reviews and retrospects that make concrete and actionable recommendations will increase the chances of success of similar activities or projects. Lastly, the promotion of open and frequent communication and sharing and the institutionalization of regularly held meetings that examine strengths to sustain and shortcomings to remedy will also improve morale.

## PROCESSES

The focus of an after-action review is to answer three broad questions: What did we set out to do? What worked well, and why? What might we do differently next time, and how? However, there are many ways to tackle these questions: the desired simplicity at the heart of after-action reviews and retrospects means that there is potential to experiment and find ways that will work best with the activity or project examined and the team involved in these. Be it for after-action reviews or retrospects, the processes should be kept simple and easy to remember. Box 1 elaborates on the purpose of the principal questions to ask. Box 2 itemizes the process of planning, preparing, conducting, and following up on an after-action review.

<sup>1</sup> After-action reviews and retrospects are not audits. The latter are often evaluative or conducted for purposes of accountability. The former aim to turn knowledge into action, not to make judgments.

**Box 1: After-Action Review Questions**

Question	Purpose
What was supposed to happen? What actually happened? Why were there differences?	These questions establish a common understanding of the work item under review. The facilitator should encourage and promote discussion around these questions. In particular, divergences from the plan should be explored.
What worked? What didn't? Why?	These questions generate reflection about the successes and failures during the course of the project, activity, event, or task. The question "Why?" generates understanding of the root causes of these successes and failures.
What would you do differently next time?	This question is intended to help identify specific actionable recommendations. The facilitator asks the team members for crisp and clear, achievable, and future-oriented recommendations.

Source: Overseas Development Institute. 2008. *After-Action Reviews and Retrospects*. Available: [www.odl.org.uk/rapid/tools/toolkits/km/aar.html](http://www.odl.org.uk/rapid/tools/toolkits/km/aar.html)

The Overseas Development Institute explains that the questions posed for a retrospect follow the after-action review format but involve asking the following more detailed questions:

- What did you set out to achieve?
- What was your plan to achieve this?
- How did this change as you progressed?
- What went well and why?
- What could have gone better?
- What advice would you give yourself if you were to go back to where you were at the start of the activity or project?
- What were the two or three key lessons you would share with others?
- What's next for you in terms of this project?

- Can you think of a story that summarizes your experience of work on this activity or project?
- What should we have learned from this activity or project a year from now?
- Are there any lessons for you personally?

**OTHERS**

After-action reviews and retrospects are not critique or complaint sessions. They are intended to maximize experience by allowing everyone to learn from each other. They are not a full-scale evaluation. And, they are not a cure for all problems. After-action reviews are successful when leaders support them, they are done immediately—by the team and for the team, and participants agree to be honest. ■



## Box 2: The After-Action Review Process

### Planning the After-Action Review

- Identify an event or activity to be reviewed.
- Identify the primary point of contact for the review.
- Determine when the after-action review will occur.
- Decide who will attend the after-action review.
- Select when and where the after-action review will take place. Plan for no more than 90 minutes.<sup>a</sup>
- Confirm who will support the after-action review, e.g., technical lead, champion, point of contact, minute taker.

### Preparing for the After-Action Review

- Select a facilitator.
- Confirm the venue and agenda.
- Obtain inputs from interested parties.
- Announce the after-action review and compile the list of attendees.
- Make logistical arrangements and set up the venue.

### Conducting the After-Action Review

- Seek maximum participation.
- Maintain focus on a positive and informative after-action review.
- Ensure honest, candid, and professional dialogue.
- Record key points.

### Following Up: Using the Results of the After-Action Review

- Determine actionable recommendations that will improve the process.
- Identify tasks requiring senior leadership decisions.
- Determine a follow-up schedule and point of contact for each follow-up action.
- Provide assistance and support as required.

<sup>a</sup> An after-action review might last as little as 20 minutes.

Note: This publication details the four steps in the after-action review process. It provides checklists for the planning and conduct of after-action reviews and for their logistical arrangements and setup. It also offers ground rules for facilitators.

Source: U.S. Agency for International Development. 2006. *After-Action Review: Technical Guidance*. Washington. Available: [http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf\\_docs/pnadf360.pdf](http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/pnadf360.pdf)





# Conducting Effective Presentations\*

Simple planning and a little discipline can turn an ordinary presentation into a lively and engaging event.



## RATIONALE

From interviews and our own observations, the following scenario is common: the speaker at a seminar shares about 30 slides, skipping over many. Time goes on...and on. Some participants lose interest; others become distracted; some even slip out. Finally, the sponsor says, "Time has run out, but maybe we can have one or two questions." Yet it looked as though the speaker had just reached the heart of the matter and it was over. What happened?

In most organizations, staff are busy and they vote with their feet. If they are bored or not actively engaged, they will find excuses to leave. Some will never return to presentations conducted by the same speaker. The good news is that guidelines for conducting effective presentations are simple and do not depend on the speaking ability of the person sharing the message.

## NOT, "HOW SHOULD I TALK?" BUT "HOW DO THEY LEARN?"

Most speakers ask the wrong questions. Their efforts are dedicated to the substantive preparation of content ("What should I say?") and pay too little attention to the most important questions: "Who is my audience?" and "How will participants learn best?" Years of research on adult learning tell us adults learn best when

- The learning purpose and boundaries are clear. The invitation, welcome address, and introduction all orient participants to why they are there and what they can expect.
- Participants first establish common ground by sharing experiences or perspectives.
- Ideas can be shared freely in open environments.

- Ideas are heard before they are critiqued.
- Participants question assumptions driving their behavior and consider alternatives.
- The learning is based on the person's own experience.
- Participants engage actively rather than receive information passively.
- The speaker works with a variety of methods (and senses)—different from typical daily routines.
- The presentation is future-oriented and does not focus on problem solving.<sup>1</sup> This creates anticipation as participants consider the implications for changes in practice.
- Topics apply directly to the professional work of participants and they mull it over next steps before they leave the room.

## FULL DISCLOSURE

Let participants know what the seminar is about and give details of who will be sharing information. The opportunities include

- a visitor from a partner agency;
- the release of a study, report, or evaluation;
- a case study of a particular project;
- a new technology, tool, or concept; and
- a perspective or inspirational talk from a leader or respected expert.

If the seminar is given primarily by a consultant marketing a tool or expertise, the announcement will need to make that clear.

\* Peter Malvicini and Albert Dean Atkinson co-wrote these *Knowledge Solutions*.

<sup>1</sup> Nothing is wrong with problem solving, but it often traps energy. A strategic approach only addresses problems that are barriers to critical action. According to Carl Jung—problems tend to resolve or "fall off the radar" naturally: "All the greatest and most important problems of life are fundamentally insoluble. They can never be solved, but only outgrown. This 'outgrowth' proved on further investigation to require a new level of consciousness. Some higher or wider interest appeared on the patient's horizon, and through this broadening of his or her outlook, the insoluble problem lost its urgency. It was not solved logically in its own terms but faded when confronted with a new and stronger life urge."



## SHARE EXPECTATIONS

Without being condescending, ask the speaker what his or her approach will be and whether you can see their slides in advance. A complex game plan or an unrealistic number of slides are good warning signs. Share these *Knowledge Solutions* with them as another way to facilitate preparation.

## AGREE ON A LENGTH OF TIME IN ADVANCE

If the event is a 1-hour presentation, time will pass quickly. One approach is to (i) take 20 minutes for a formal presentation; (ii) move to a question-and-answer session and, if time permits; (iii) hold a constructive group discussion. Better still, if possible, integrate brief questions after certain sections of the presentation instead of saving them for last.

## 20-MINUTE ATTENTION SPAN

Even if your speaker is spellbinding, research shows that most people lose interest after 20 minutes. If the presentation spans 1 hour, it should be broken up with questions and answers or open discussions. Better to leave the group wanting more, than wishing you had given less.

## TELL YOUR STORY

Illustrations and anecdotes are key to making points effectively and relating to participants.

## TAKEAWAYS

Supplement the presentation with a brief handout (not merely a copy of the slides)—takeaways add value and catalyze follow-through.

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Ask the speaker to craft a few discussion questions in advance. Questions that draw experience work best. Analytical questions are second best. Questions about how ideas might be applied are more difficult. For example: (i) What is *your* experience in this area? (ii) Why do you think it worked that way? (iii) What can be done differently in the future?

## ORGANIZING A PRESENTATION

In the introduction to the movie, *The Prestige*, the magician explains that there are three parts to every illusion. The first part is the *pledge* where the audience is told what they will see in order to capture attention. The second is the *turn* at which point the trick is performed. Third, the magician restores what he made disappear—it is a moment of awe and appreciation. “Ta-da!” Though not magic, research in communication and adult learning shows that even a brief presentation should follow a similar sequence. For this, we can use *hook–look–took*:

- **Hook.** The very start of any presentation should answer the participants’ unstated question, “What’s in it for me?” This effectively draws people in, helping them quickly relate the

topic to their experience (past, present, or future). Relevance is established. An effective hook can be a question or a brief story. The speaker should not wait until the end of the presentation to confirm the relevance of the message. Even before the presentation begins, the speaker should display the title of the presentation as participants seat themselves. This allows participants to prepare for the topic. Better yet, a pre-presentation might automatically loop introductory slides to give the audience background information.

- **Look.** This is the heart of the presentation, where the concepts and experiences are explained, illustrated, and examined. A seminar is different from a workshop—the presenter must be selective and synthetic. In many cases, introducing a topic and piquing participant interest are all one can reasonably expect in the time frame. A few well-placed illustrations or stories can pull a presentation nicely together.
- **Took.** Most speakers would like participants to apply or use what they learn in their professional work. Should participants do anything with the knowledge gained from the seminar? If the answer is yes, *they are unlikely to do anything they do not discuss at the seminar*. Application is not automatic—even the best seminars are quickly forgotten. If there is a specific opportunity to follow up or take a next step, try to “close the deal” at the seminar.

## SLIDE MAXIMS

- **Follow the Rule of 7 (or 777).** It recommends a maximum of 7 lines of text on any slide, a maximum of 7 words on any one line, and a maximum of 7 slides in a 20-minute talk.
- **Do Not Read Your Slides.** Most participants read just as well. Paraphrasing the content works, as does illustrating it.
- **Choose Your Fonts Carefully.** Font selection can help or hurt a presentation. Sans serif fonts (such as Arial) are best used for titles, while serif fonts (such as Times New Roman) make the text of the main body easier to read.<sup>2</sup>
- **Use Subtle Transition Effects.** When changing slides, avoid dizzying effects, such as elaborate fade-ins.
- **Do Not Skip Slides.** Edit the presentation in advance based on the time given. “Recycled” talks need to be adapted to the particular group.
- **Use Graphics Prudently.** A picture is worth a thousand words. Full slide photographs or clearly illustrated diagrams can be inserted every three to five slides to provide visual learners with a medium appealing to their senses. Similarly, short audio clips reinforce concepts for audio learners, while short video clips meet the needs of both audio and visual learners.
- **Evaluate the Use of Slides.** It sounds like heresy but not every presentation benefits from slides. In some cases, a handout with informal sharing of experience or “stories” is more effective. Try it for a change.

<sup>2</sup> And you can read them up to 20% faster, as serifs help the eye tie letters together.



## ON THE DAY OF THE PRESENTATION

The speaker should arrive at the venue at least 15 minutes in advance to check the sound system, projector, computer connection, and internet connection. If using a remote control for slide advancement or laser pointer, he or she should become comfortable with how they work. Nothing is more frustrating to participants than watching a presenter attempt to get the slides to show up on a projector, and then have

them fumble with a remote control or laser pointer while they speak.

## PREPARATION

A little preparation, when it comes to the conducting presentations, is much better than none. But, not all the ideas in these *Knowledge Solutions* should be applied at once. Presenters should try a few and see what happens. ■



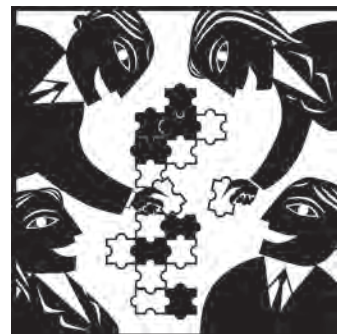
### KNOWLEDGE SHARING AND LEARNING

Two-way communications that take place simply and effectively build knowledge.



# Conducting Peer Assists

Peer assists are events that bring individuals together to share their experiences, insights, and knowledge on an identified challenge or problem. They also promote collective learning and develop networks among those invited.



## RATIONALE

The experience that an organization has gained is its most important asset. Exit interviews are a way of capturing knowledge from leavers, but can only be relied upon once. Peer assists capture knowledge before employees leave, and in such ways that can repeatedly apply and strengthen good practice as well as consistency across an organization.

## DEFINITION

The formal use of peer assists as a management tool was pioneered by British Petroleum to help staff learn from the experiences of others before they embark on an activity or project. Put simply, a peer assist is the process whereby a team working on an activity or project calls a meeting or workshop to seek knowledge and insights from a good mix of people in other teams. From the onset, the distinction between a peer assist and a peer review should be made explicit: without it,

participants will fall into the familiar patterns of peer reviews and little knowledge will be transferred. Table 1 explains the principal differences between the two.

## BENEFITS

Peer assists are part of the process of “learning before doing.” They are about gathering knowledge from knowledge brokers before embarking on an activity or project, or when facing a difficulty in the course of related events. The benefits of peer assists are quickly realized: learning is focused directly on a specific issue and can therefore be applied immediately. A peer assist allows the team involved to gain input and insights from people outside the team, and to identify possible new lines of enquiry or approach—in short, reusing existing knowledge and experience rather than having to reinvent the wheel. Peer assists also have wider benefits: they promote sharing of learning between teams, and help develop strong networks

**Table 1: How does a peer assist differ from a peer review?**

	Peer Review	Peer Assist
Goal	To judge the work of others	To transfer knowledge to others
Purpose	The purpose of a peer review is evaluative.	The purpose of a peer assist is collaborative.
Task	The core task of a peer review is to critique the activity or project.	The core task of a peer assist is to learn with and through the team that calls the assist.
Participants	Peer reviewers are selected by others.	The team that calls the peer assist selects the assisters, i.e., those whom they think could be of help to them.
Nature	Peer reviews can be a “dog-and-pony” show aimed at receiving a good evaluation.	A peer assist is a problem-solving, working session.
Roles	Some people are always peer reviewers. Others are always receivers.	The role of participants to a peer assist is reciprocal. Members of the team calling the assist may themselves assist others.
Reporting	The peer review report is sent to management.	The peer assist report is sent only to the team requesting the peer assist.

Source: Adapted from Common Knowledge Associates. 2007. *Peer Assists: Guidelines for Practice*. Available: [www.commonknowledge.org/userimages/resources\\_peer\\_assist\\_guidelines+.pdf](http://www.commonknowledge.org/userimages/resources_peer_assist_guidelines+.pdf)

among people. They are relatively simple and inexpensive to organize: they do not require special resources or new, unfamiliar processes. It is worth using a peer assist when a team is facing a challenge, where the knowledge of others will really help, and when the potential benefits outweigh the costs of travel.

## PROCESS

There is no single way to hold a peer assist. Box 1 outlines the method that has worked for British Petroleum. Box 2 gives an example of a peer assist at British Petroleum in the form of a story. Table 2 shows what a meeting agenda for a peer assist might look like.

### Box 1: Peer Assists at British Petroleum

**Clarify the Purpose of the Peer Assist.** Peer assists work well when their purpose is clear and you communicate that purpose to participants. Define the specific problem you are seeking help with, and be sure that your aim in calling a peer assist is to learn something (rather than seeking endorsement for a decision you have already made).

**Has the Problem Already Been Solved? Do some research to find out who else has already solved or tackled a similar problem.** Also, share your peer assist plans with others, as there may be other teams who are currently tackling a similar problem who could also benefit from participating in the peer assist.

**Enlist the Help of a Facilitator.** You will need a facilitator from outside the team to make sure participants to the meeting reach the desired outcome. The facilitator also may or may not record the event: be sure to agree on that before the meeting.

**Pay Attention to Timing.** Ensure that you plan a date for the peer assist that is early enough in your project to make use of the input you receive and to do something different on the basis of what you have learned. A frequent mistake is to hold the meeting too close to the decision date to make a real impact. Consider that you might get a different response to the one you expect: will you have time to do anything about it? The length of a peer assist depends on the complexity of the problem and tends to be somewhere between half a day and two days.

**Select the Participants.** Once you are clear on your purpose, select participants who have the diversity of knowledge, skills and experiences needed for the peer assist. Four to five people are a good number.<sup>a</sup> Look “across” the organization rather than “up” it—hierarchies can hamper the free exchange of knowledge whereas peers tend to be much more open with each other and can challenge without feeling threatened. Avoid the temptation to select “the usual suspects.” If the same experts are selected for peer assists again and again, you may be limiting the number of fresh ideas and perspectives available to you. Similarly, seek to select people who will challenge your ways of thinking and working and perhaps offer a different angle, rather than looking for people who will validate your current Reports drawn up on the lines I propose may first seem rough as compared with the flat surface of “officialese” jargon. But the saving in time will be great, while the discipline of setting out the real points concisely will prove an aid to clearer thinking.

**Be Clear about Deliverables.** Be clear about what you hope to achieve during the peer assist and then plan the time to achieve that. The deliverables should comprise options and insights rather than providing an answer. It is up to the person or team who called the peer assist to then make the relevant decisions, based on what is learned. Provide the participants with any briefing materials in advance so that they have adequate time to prepare.

**Allow Time for Socializing.** Allow time in your agenda for the teams to get to know one another; this might be a dinner the night before or time for coffee at the start of the day. It is important to build rapport so that the group can work openly together.

**Describe the Purpose and Set the Ground Rules.** At the start of the meeting, ensure that everyone is clear about the purpose of the peer assist and their roles within it. The role of the host team is to listen in order to understand and learn. The role of the visiting team is to share knowledge and experience to help resolve the challenge without adding to the workload. Agree that where there are areas of contention, you will focus on the activity or project rather than on the individual people involved.

**Share Information and Context.** Divide the meeting time roughly into four equal parts. During the first quarter, the host team will present the context, history, and their future plans regarding the problem or challenge in question. Keep this part short and sharp—you only want to say enough to get the visiting team started in the right direction. Remember that the purpose of the peer assist is to learn rather than tell. When communicating the problem or challenge about which you are seeking input, be prepared for it to be redefined as part of the peer assist process. It may be that the problem you have identified is in fact the symptom of a further problem and the peer assist will help you identify the root cause.

**Encourage the Participants to Ask Questions and Give Feedback.** In the second quarter, the participants consider what they have heard, and then begin by discussing what they have heard that has surprised them, and what they expected to hear but haven’t. The host team should take a back seat at this stage and simply listen; in some cases they may even opt to leave the room. The participants then consider what else they need to know to address the problem and where might they find that knowledge. It may be that they want to make some telephone calls and talk to some other people, or request some data or reports. Remember, they are not seeking to solve the problem but to offer some options and insights based on their own knowledge and experience.

**Analyze What You Have Heard.** The third quarter of the meeting is for the visiting team to then analyze and reflect on what they have learned and to examine options. Again, the home team remains largely in the back seat; it might be appropriate to involve one or two of them, provided that they continue to listen and learn rather than closing off options or seeking to draw conclusions too early.

**Present Feedback and Agree on Actions.** In the fourth and final quarter of the meeting, the visiting team presents their feedback to the host team and answers any questions. The presentation will be along the lines of “what we have learned, what options we see, and what has worked elsewhere.” As with all feedback, this should start with the positive—what has been done well, and then what options there are to do things differently. When presenting what has worked elsewhere, participants should simply tell the story rather than prescribing “you should...” In closing, the person who called the peer assist should acknowledge the contribution of the visiting team, and also commit to when he or she will get back with an action list of what the team are going to do differently. Finally, invite the visiting team to reflect on what they have learned and what they will take away and apply. Learning is never one-way.

<sup>a</sup> Having more than five participants makes it difficult to have an in-depth discussion.

Source: Adapted from National Library for Health. 2008. Knowledge Management Specialist Library. *Peer Assists*. Available: [www.library.nhs.uk/knowledgemanagement/viewresource.aspx?resid=125167&tabid=290](http://www.library.nhs.uk/knowledgemanagement/viewresource.aspx?resid=125167&tabid=290)



## Box 2: Peer Assist at British Petroleum

Helen is a team leader for British Petroleum's Barden Exploration site. She has four people reporting to her, two geophysicists, a geologist, and a petroleum engineer. The team has spent several months collecting and analyzing a great deal of data about the possible well site off the coast of Norway known as Barden. The team is at a point where they need to make a decision as to how they will proceed. Should they commit to a rig? Should they make firm commitments to their partners in the exploration license? These are important decisions because of the money involved; a rig, for example, can cost up to \$200 a minute.

Helen's team has decided it would be useful for her to call upon the knowledge that other people in British Petroleum have learned about this type of prospect. They are going to call a peer assist. That means identifying people from other parts of the world who have experience with the kind of issues facing the Barden team. Helen identifies about 15 possible candidates; people she has worked with before or knows about through the grapevine. She makes the calls. She finds some are too busy on other projects, but she ends up with six people from her original list that she thinks can be very helpful, three from the Norway office, one from Scotland, one from South Africa, and two from London. They have agreed to meet on Wednesday, one month from now, in Stavanger, Norway, to spend the day.

On the meeting day, Helen starts by defining what her team wants from the peer assist. She lays out their objectives for the meeting. The peer assist members have received a packet of material to read through in advance. The walls of the conference room where Helen's team and the peer assisters are meeting are covered with pictures of the ocean bed, seismic lines, and charts. More are spread several layers deep on the tables around the room. As Helen finishes her introduction, the peer assist group asks some clarification questions about the objectives, and then Helen introduces Knut who begins to talk through the data and his interpretation of it. Before long, everyone is up looking more closely at the wall data. There is a lively discussion about the implications among all the participants.

After a coffee break, Martin, another team member, is introduced and he begins to show the data for seismic velocity. Again, within minutes, the whole group is back on their feet examining the charts more closely. The discussion flows back and forth with the peer assist members asking each other technical questions about the data and often challenging each other's responses.

After the lunch break, Helen says that they have finished presenting the data they planned. The peer assist group again returns to

questions about the original objectives for clarification in light of what they have just heard. One of peer assisters notes that: "I'm uncomfortable with the discussion because there are some strategic decisions to be made before we can give our opinion on whether to drill the well." The group decides they need to develop criteria for drilling the Barden well. Collaboratively the two groups develop these criteria, gaining additional insight as they talk through each point.

About three o'clock, Helen says she would like to excuse herself and her team to give the assist team a chance to talk through the response they want to make. Once the Barden team leaves the room, the peer assist group designates one member to keep track of their ideas on the flip charts and they consider who should make the report when the team returns. As the group gets down to work on their recommendations there is an animated exchange. For nearly every assertion that is made, someone wants to know why that is needed or why it should be given preference over other points. The member from Scotland suggests a new technique they have just developed west of the Shetlands that could provide useful additional data on a prospect like Barden. He offers to send the specifications for that process and to spend some time helping the Barden team go through it the first time. The discussion is technical but it is very open and lively. It is obvious that the members are interested in this situation and want to be of help.

About five o'clock, the Barden team returns to hear the ideas of the assist team. The spokesperson thanks the Barden team for giving them a chance to work on such an interesting problem and notes they have all learned from the exchange. The verbal report is given with the promise of a more formal written report later.

As the report proceeds the Barden team asks a few clarification questions, but mostly they listen to the thoughtful response this team is providing. When the report is finished, Helen says that the report is very clear and notes that it has given her team a great deal to think about as they move toward the decisions they must make. She acknowledges that the Barden team was nervous about whether it was too early in their investigation to call for a peer assist, but she is now convinced that the timing was right. The team can take the recommendations into account before they are fully committed to a course of action. The day ends with a dinner at a local restaurant. The dinner is relaxed, and people have time to talk through how the peer assist went. The dinner is a way for the Barden team to express their gratitude to those who came to lend their knowledge.

Source: Adapted from National Library for Health. 2008. Knowledge Management Specialist Library. *Peer Assists*. Available: [www.library.nhs.uk/knowledgemanagement/](http://www.library.nhs.uk/knowledgemanagement/)

**Table 2: Meeting Agenda for Peer Assists<sup>a</sup>**

Item	Time Allowed
1. The participants introduce themselves. The activity or project leader presents the context, history, and ideas regarding the activity or project at hand. He or she states the objective of the peer assist and enables possible redefinition of the session.	
2. The participants consider the problem or challenge the activity or project team faces. They present or discuss what has been covered and whatever information was not included in the pre-documents. <sup>b</sup>	
3. The peer assisters consider what the activity or project team might need to know to address the problem or challenge it faces.	
4. The peer assisters are given time to reflect on what has been learned and to examine options. <sup>c</sup>	
5. The peer assisters provide non-prescriptive recommendations to the activity or project team. <sup>d</sup> They respond to specific questions.	
6. The activity or project team acknowledges the contributions of participants. It responds to the peer assisters, noting what it found particularly useful. It may commit to a timeline for delivery of an action list, emphasizing the different things that it will do as a result of the peer assist. <sup>e</sup> Follow-up interviews may be considered.	

<sup>a</sup> Complex problems or challenges may require time for the peer assisters and the activity or project team to socialize outside of meeting times. The establishment of good rapport is fundamental to the learning process.

<sup>b</sup> Participants should be given material in advance so that they may prepare for the peer assist.

<sup>c</sup> This may require that the activity or project team leave the premises.

<sup>d</sup> Participants share knowledge to help resolve the problem or challenge without adding to the workload.

<sup>e</sup> This is not the time for decisions. The team will make these on a separate, team-held occasion.

Source: Adapted from Common Knowledge Associates. 2007. *Peer Assists: Guidelines for Practice*. Available: [www.commonknowledge.org/userimages/resources\\_peer\\_assist\\_guidelines+.pdf](http://www.commonknowledge.org/userimages/resources_peer_assist_guidelines+.pdf)

## OTHERS

An important consideration is that of evidence-based practice. When conducting peer assists, staff will need to ensure that lessons learned are based on a combination of both on-the-job experience and evidence. They might wish to carry out an after-action review following the peer assist to look at whether the

process went according to plan, what was different and why, and what can one learn from that for the next time. While the peer assist process is designed to provide input for a specific purpose or project, they should consider who else might benefit from the lessons learned. ■



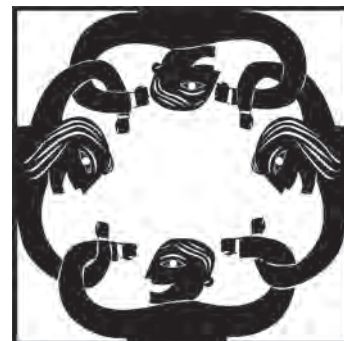
### KNOWLEDGE SHARING AND LEARNING

Two-way communications that take place simply and effectively build knowledge.



# Conducting Successful Retreats\*

A retreat is a meeting designed and organized to facilitate the ability of a group to step back from day-to-day activities for a period of concentrated discussion, dialogue, and strategic thinking about their organization's future or specific issues. Organizations will reap full benefits if they follow basic rules.



## RATIONALE

People look forward to retreats (or workshops) with excitement or dread. At best, it is a time for renewal, team building, and focusing work. At worst, it is a dull 2 days of lectures or extended meetings. A good retreat works in three dimensions—the practical, the ideal, and the political—ignore any one and you are headed for trouble.

## APPLICATIONS

There are as many reasons for conducting a retreat as there are issues and challenges facing an organization. Among the most common uses of retreats are

- Helping set or change strategic direction.
- Fostering a collective vision.
- Creating a common framework and point of reference.
- Developing annual goals, objectives, and budgets.
- Discussing specific issues or challenges facing the organization.
- Dealing with sources of conflict and confusion.
- Generating creative solutions for entrenched problems.
- Improving working relationships and increasing trust.
- Encouraging honest and enlightened conversations.
- Letting people be heard on issues that are important to them.
- Orienting new staff.

## TIPS FOR EFFECTIVE RETREATS

Here are a dozen tips to make retreats more effective:

- **Start at the End.** Know what you want from your retreat, “your intended outcomes,” and how you will follow up the event. Work with a planning group in your unit and be clear about these outcomes from the beginning. Be careful not to define predetermined results: instead choose a focus to guide

your work: “a plan to implement x,” “a new strategy for y,” “actions to strengthen workflows and business processes,” etc.

- **Get Away.** Allow some physical or psychological distance from the office and see what happens. If you are on-site, distractions can undermine work and preserve the formality one is trying to break down.<sup>1</sup> Crossing the street is better than going nowhere. If working for a couple of days, try something further afield—the cost is small compared with the gain from the energy and continuity you create. The intensive effort and concentrated time staff can give to an effort normally pays off. The work and fun had in two 10-hour days off-site gains more than two 6-hour days on-site and much more than weekly committee meetings for a year.
- **Suspend the Rules.** The workplace carries sets of unspoken rules and implied norms of behavior, especially when dealing with people of different position and status within the hierarchy. At least during your retreat, remove these boundaries and create broad ownership of the task as a team. During introductions make this clear. Rein in any dominant senior personnel, and let participants see how important it is that all have a voice. And please leave formal business dress behind.
- **Work as a Team.** Retreats are special. So do not organize them like a 2-day staff meeting or a symposium. If participants are passive, they will lose interest even in the most captivating speakers. Information sharing is more effective by print through a briefing pack for the event. Short briefings are useful as background for an activity, but spend most of your time in deliberation, preferably in smaller groups, and large group discussion of those ideas.

\* Peter Malvicini contributed to these *Knowledge Solutions*.

<sup>1</sup> The reasons for this are straightforward: retreats require long periods of intense, uninterrupted discussion; participants are less likely to be interrupted by phone calls and other staff if they are away from the office; participants can better focus on the topics under discussion; participants are more likely to stay for the entire time; and being “away on retreat” creates an atmosphere that is more conducive to teamwork, creative thinking, and consensus building.



- **Discuss the “Undiscussable.”** All units have concerns not normally put on the table (but everyone is aware of them)—typically these issues are a barrier to productive work. A retreat can be a time to work on these areas positively and productively. Discussions in smaller groups can help staff vent any frustrations and then return to the larger group with practical solutions. Do not miss a chance to do important work and break through a serious bottleneck to effectiveness.
- **Keep It Real.** Do real work. As much as possible, avoid simulations, abstract discussions, and lectures from experts. Real tasks energize participants, combined with challenging matters that concern them most, and a process that lets them question, deliberate, and refine their ideas and actions. “Experts” can be useful as resource persons to serve the task, but many find the combined expertise of their staff to be more than adequate for the job.
- **Do Not Play Games (Just Have Fun).** By design, a retreat is less formal than the workplace. That informality is one way of engaging people and creating a safe environment. Game playing may send mixed signals, especially when the organization’s culture views them as silly. Creative ways of working with small groups or teams and creative ways of presenting ongoing work will allow the humor of participants to break through spontaneously—this can be useful especially when dealing with difficult topics and concerns. This is also an effective way of indirect team building.
- **Mix It Up.** Variety will hold the interest of participants. Try different size discussion groups, different small group processes, and different ways of sharing group outputs. Avoid organizing things the same way you would back at the workplace. People learn and plan differently—create opportunities for all participants.
- **Think Big.** By stepping away from work routine, participants have a chance to rediscover the meaning and motivation for their daily work. Whenever possible, allow all staff to envision the future of the organization—they can build a shared understanding, and this is powerful. Staff then move swiftly from a “bird’s eye view” of desired outcomes and goals, translating them into concrete results.
- **Think Small.** Staff and management want concrete results. Discussing the “nuts and bolts” of implementation means the difference between real follow-up and good intentions. There will not be time to consider all details. But, draft basic timetables and share responsibility for follow-up tasks before you leave the retreat.
- **Just Do It.** Deliberation is great. Deliberative action is better. The climax of a good retreat should be decisions for new action. A poorly planned retreat will not leave enough time for this and the lack of follow-up will be obvious.
- **Get Professional Help.** Planning your retreat need not drive you insane. Most organizations can benefit from using a facilitator with expertise in group dynamics, group processes, team building, decision making, and consensus building. He or she will help plan the retreat, develop the agenda, and set realistic goals and expectations. During the retreat the facilitator will manage or facilitate group discussions.<sup>2</sup> The facilitator should have no particular stake or interest in the issues being discussed. His or her sole interest should be in helping the group have a successful retreat. During the retreat, the facilitator will also function as a recorder for the group by capturing the key points on a flip chart or on computer. After the retreat, the facilitator will generally provide the group with a written report summarizing the discussions, any decisions that were made, and action steps to be taken. If no professional facilitators

**Table: Retreat Planning Checklist**

Purpose	Location
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What is the purpose of the retreat?</li> <li>• What criteria will we use to determine if the retreat was successful?</li> <li>• Who supports the idea of holding a retreat?</li> <li>• Who is opposed to the idea?</li> <li>• Who needs to attend the retreat?</li> <li>• Who will participate?</li> <li>• Will all the key participants be able to attend?</li> <li>• How much time will they be willing to spend at the retreat?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Where will the retreat be held?</li> <li>• Are the rules governing the use of the space acceptable?</li> <li>• Can the room be arranged as we want it?</li> <li>• Are the chairs comfortable?</li> <li>• Is there good control over lighting and air conditioning?</li> <li>• Can we have food, snacks, and refreshments in the room?</li> <li>• Who will provide food, snacks, and refreshments?</li> <li>• Can we hang flip chart paper on the walls?</li> <li>• How will breaks and meals be handled?</li> <li>• Will overnight accommodation be needed?</li> </ul>
Equipment	Facilitator
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What equipment will be needed?</li> <li>• Who will provide it?</li> <li>• Who will operate it?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do we need an outside facilitator?</li> <li>• Who will facilitate?</li> <li>• How much experience does the facilitator have with groups like ours?</li> </ul>
Recording and Reporting	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do we want to record the meeting?</li> <li>• What kind of a retreat report do we need?</li> </ul>	

Source: Authors.

<sup>2</sup> This will involve tracking three levels of activity—the substance of the work, the process, and the relationships (psychosocial environment).





are available, consider training members of your unit or borrow (or swap) experienced facilitators from other units.

### REASONS NOT TO HOLD A RETREAT

Retreats will not help if the organizer has no intention (or ability) to follow through or act on the suggestions of participants or if the intention is to

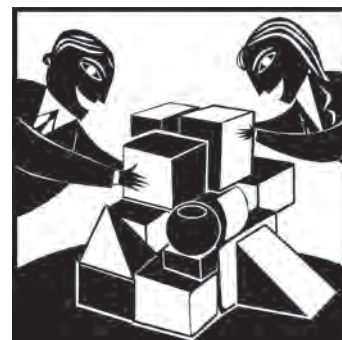
- Fulfill a covert agenda.
- Make an individual's problem the group's problem.
- Talk at participants instead of with them.
- Improve morale.
- Treat the retreat as a reward. ■





# Dimensions of the Learning Organization

Organizational learning is still seeking a theory and there can be no (and perhaps cannot be) agreement on the dimensions of the learning organization. However, useful models associated with learning and change can be leveraged individually or in association to reflect on the overall system of an organization.



## BACKGROUND

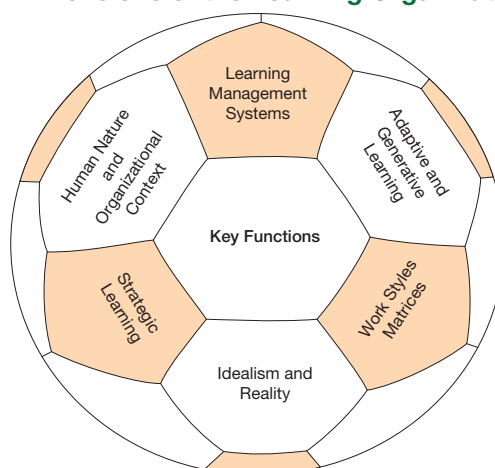
If organizational learning is still seeking a theory, there can be no (and perhaps cannot be) agreement on the dimensions of the learning organization. Even if the dimensions were understood, the connection between learning (or lack thereof) and performance remains unclear.<sup>1</sup> However, regardless of the disputed state of the art, a multilevel, practical but necessarily exploratory and simple framework of common and individual variables associated with learning and change follows. Here as elsewhere, experimentation has an important role to play. Individual and collective learning are not about finding out

**“The purpose of science is not to analyze or describe but to make useful models of the world. A model is useful if it allows us to get use out of it.”**

—Edward de Bono

what others already know, even if that is a useful first stage—it is about solving problems<sup>2</sup> by doing, reflecting, connecting, and testing until a solution forms part of organizational life. There is no stock answer nor is there a single best approach.<sup>3</sup> Figure 1 suggests concepts that can be used individually or in association to reflect on the overall system.

**Figure 1: Dimensions of the Learning Organization**



Source: Author.

<sup>1</sup> Most organizations know little about where they lose knowledge, so the costs of lost knowledge are largely hidden. As a result, there is no clear ownership of the problem and little value is given to knowledge-sharing activities.

<sup>2</sup> Some streams of open systems theory reject problem solving as unproductive, instead preferring to work on desirable futures and necessary actions (only “solving problems” as they become barriers to a goal). The difference in the outlooks is significant.

<sup>3</sup> A parallel can be found in the disparity of systems models for organizational design. Those used often in the last 20–30 years have included McKinsey’s 7-S Model, Galbraith’s Star Model, Weisbord’s Six Box Model, Nadler and Tushman’s Congruence Model, and Burke-Litwin’s Causal Model. Each of these shines a particular light on an organizational system, in the way perhaps that astronomers standing on different planets would examine different configurations of the universe. No one perspective is correct. The choice of model depends also on how complex its user wishes it to be. In recent years, less inward-looking (closed system) models have been developed.



## WHY BECOME A LEARNING ORGANIZATION

Figure 2 provides a matter-of-fact, multidisciplinary argument for why one might want to create a learning organization.

## LEARNING MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS

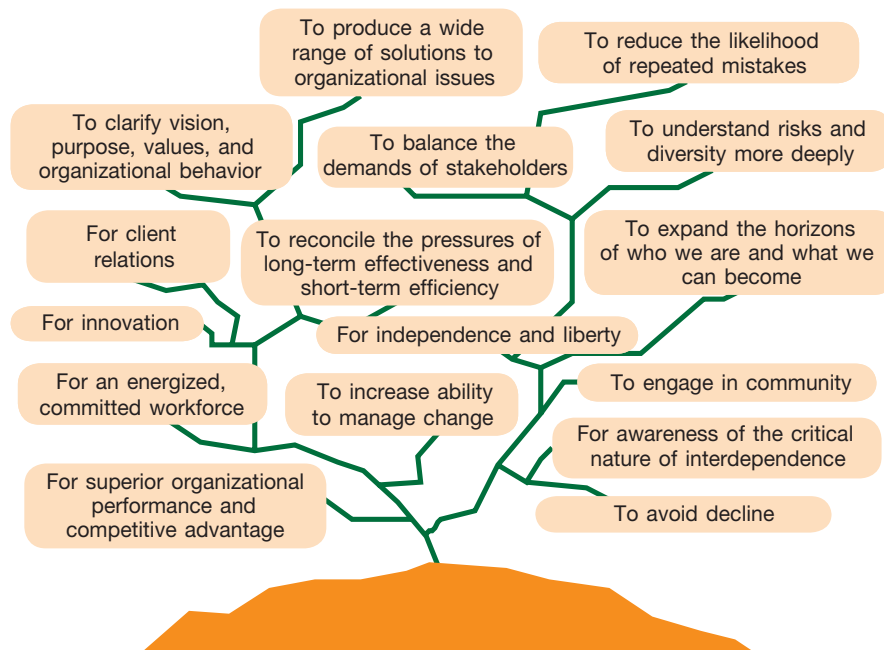
At the simplest level, one might consider the critical applications that would allow an organization to recognize its learning orientations and, from there, mark out the structures that affect how easy or hard it is for learning to occur. Figure 3 isolates

12 key learning systems from a managerial, somewhat top-down, perspective.

## KEY FUNCTIONS

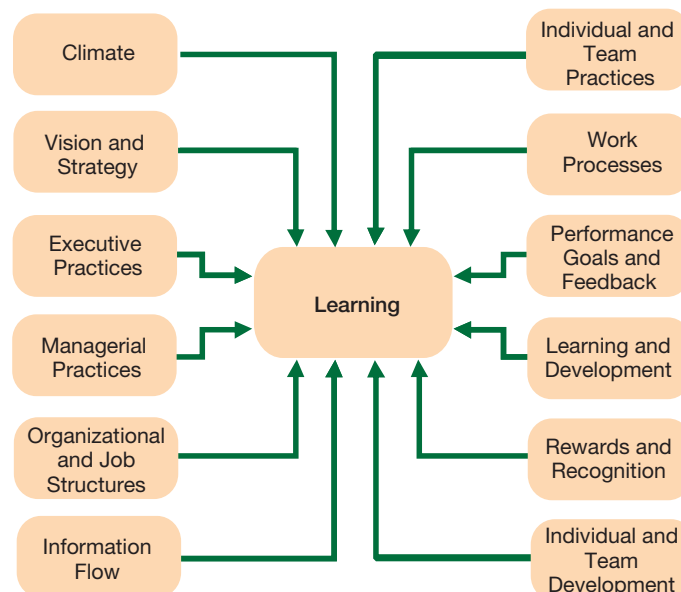
The literature on learning organizations suggests that certain key tasks must be undertaken for an organization to learn effectively. Figure 4 presents a set of competencies that might need to be developed to support learning, largely from a functional perspective.

**Figure 2: Reasons that Drive Organizational Learning**

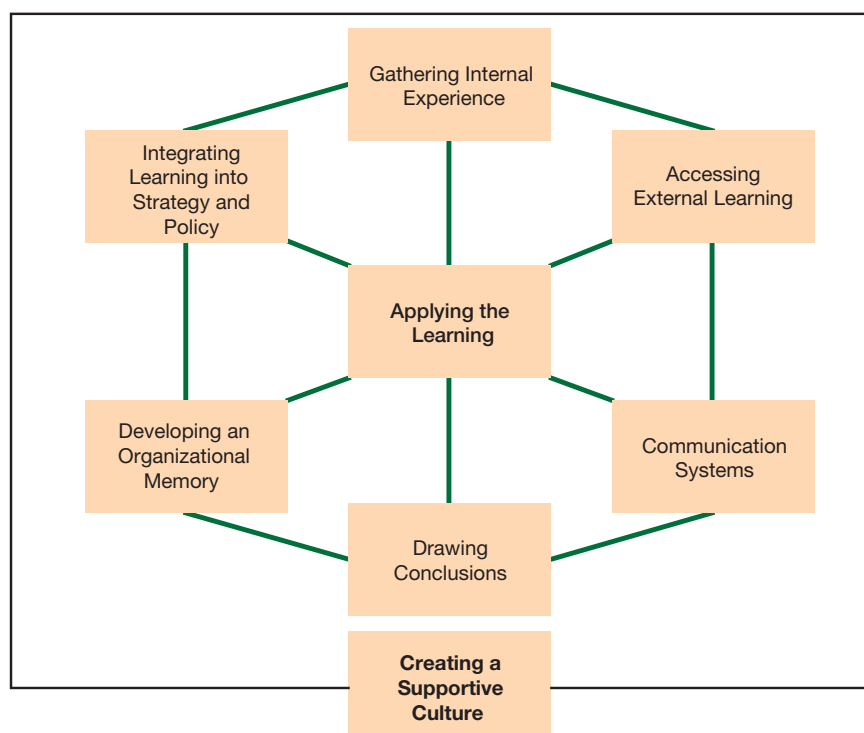


Source: Author.

**Figure 3: Learning Management Systems**



Source: Author.

**Figure 4: Key Functions**

Source: Britton, B. 1998. The Learning NGO. *International NGO Training and Research Center Occasional Paper No. 17*. Available: [www.intrac.org/data/files/resources/381/OPS-17-The-Learning-NGO.pdf](http://www.intrac.org/data/files/resources/381/OPS-17-The-Learning-NGO.pdf)

## ADAPTIVE AND GENERATIVE LEARNING

It is also helpful to demarcate some dimensions of the learning organization in terms of adaptive and generative learning,

the two most commonly cited distinguishing characteristics of organizational learning. Table 1 selects a few attributes of learning primarily from a structural perspective.

**Table 1: Adaptive and Generative Learning**

	Adaptive	Generative
<b>Strategic Characteristics</b>		
• Core competence	• Better sameness	• Meaningful difference
• Source of strength	• Stability	• Change
• Output	• Market share	• Market creation
• Organizational perspective	• Compartmentalization	• Systemic
• Development dynamic	• Change	• Transformation
<b>Structural Characteristics</b>		
• Structure	• Bureaucratic	• Network
• Control systems	• Formal rules	• Values, self-control
• Power bases	• Hierarchical position	• Knowledge
• Integrating mechanisms	• Hierarchy	• Teams
• Networks	• Disconnected	• Strong
• Communication flows	• Hierarchical	• Lateral

*continued on next page*



Table 1 continued

	Adaptive	Generative
<b>Human Resources Practices</b>		
• Performance appraisal system	• Rewards stability	• Flexibility
• Basis for rewards	• Short-term financial rewards	• Long-term financial and human resource development
• Focus of rewards	• Distribution of scarcity	• Determination of synergy
• Status symbols	• Rank and title	• Making a difference
• Mobility patterns	• Within division or function	• Across divisions or functions
• Mentoring	• Not rewarded	• Integral part of performance appraisal process
• Culture	• Market	• Clan
<b>Managers' Behaviors</b>		
• Perspective	• Controlling	• Openness
• Problem-solving orientation	• Narrow	• Systemic thinking
• Response style	• Conforming	• Creative
• Personal control	• Blame and acceptance	• Efficacious
• Commitment	• Ethnocentric	• Empathetic

Source: McGill, M., J. Slocum, and D. Lei. 1992. Management Practices in Learning Organizations. *Organizational Dynamics*. 22 (1). pp. 5–17.

## RELATING HUMAN NATURE TO ORGANIZATIONAL CONTEXT

Social capital is the stock of active connections among people, that is, the mutual understanding, shared values and behaviors, and trust that bind members of networks and communities, making cooperation possible. The social cohesion that results is critical for societies to prosper and for development to be sustainable. The literature on social capital is vast but the idea of looking at social capital in organizations, not society, is relatively new. Here, the argument is that social capital makes an organization more than a collection of individuals. Charles Ehin offered a comprehensive framework to understand how human nature supports or undermines voluntary workplace collaboration and innovation.<sup>4</sup> Figure 5 outlines several vital considerations pertaining to the functioning of organizations from a social capital perspective.

## STRATEGIC LEARNING

Organizational learning must be understood as a pattern in a stream of decisions. How does strategy form in organizations? The various types of strategies uncovered in research can be located somewhere between the ends of a continuum along which real-world strategies lay. The most common might be labeled “planned,” “entrepreneurial,” “ideological,” “umbrella,” “process,” “unconnected,” “consensus,” and “imposed.” The results will either be intended or realized. More interestingly, Henry Mintzberg distinguished deliberate strategies—realized as intended—from emergent strategies—patterns or consistencies realized despite, or in the absence of, intentions. Figure 6 reveals how strategy formulation that walks on two feet—one deliberate, the other emergent—can inform strategic learning.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>4</sup> Ehin, C. 2000. *Unleashing Intellectual Capital*. Boston: Butterworth-Heinemann.

<sup>5</sup> Still, notwithstanding the intuitive sense of Mintzberg’s approach to strategy learning, failing to grasp thoroughly the influence of power on the strategy-making process can severely inhibit the potential of strategy making as a vehicle of organizational learning. Views of organizations as cohesive entities are unrealistic and unhelpful, and it is vital to recognize the plethora of interest groups that inevitably compete to shape an organization’s direction.

Figure 5: Relating Human Nature to Organizational Context

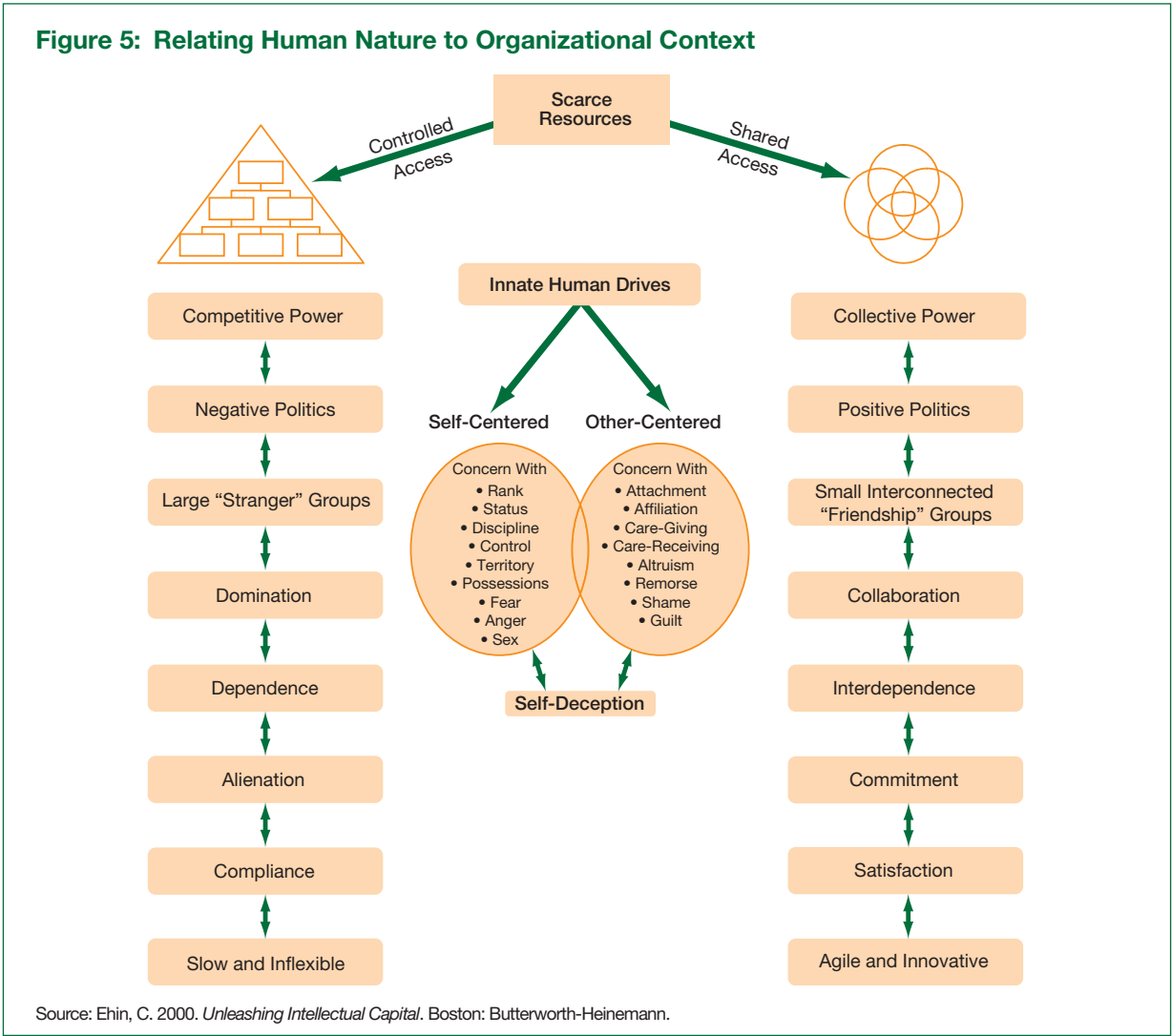
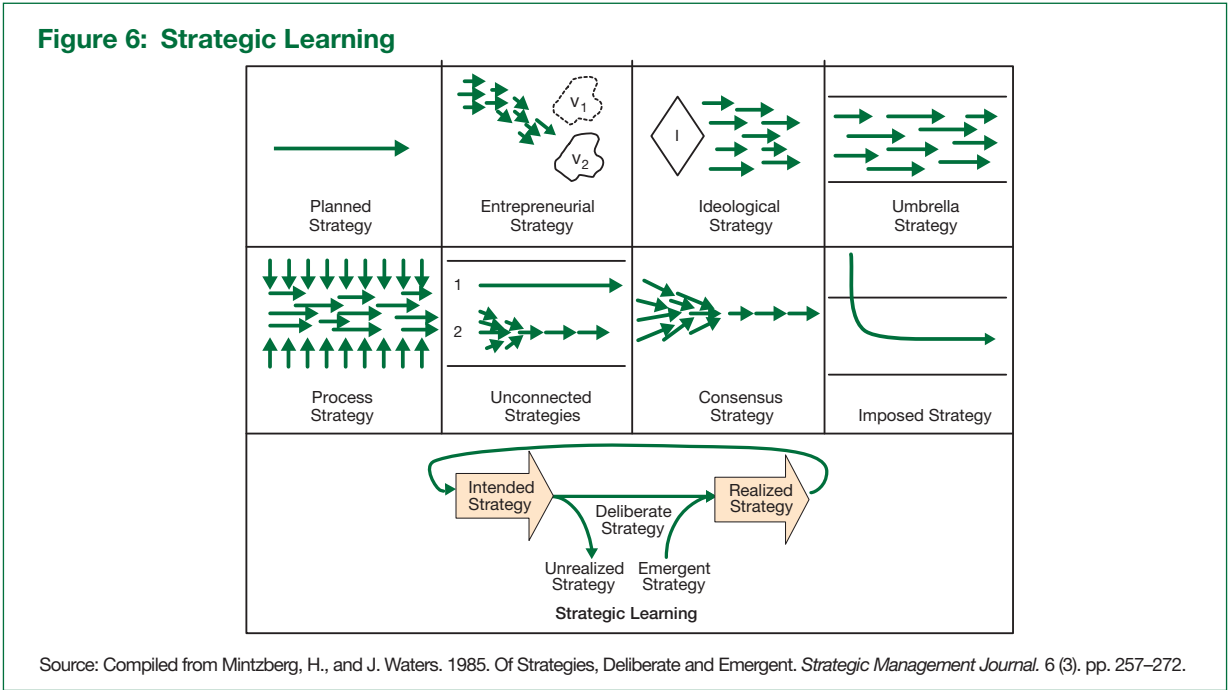


Figure 6: Strategic Learning





## WORK STYLES MATRICES

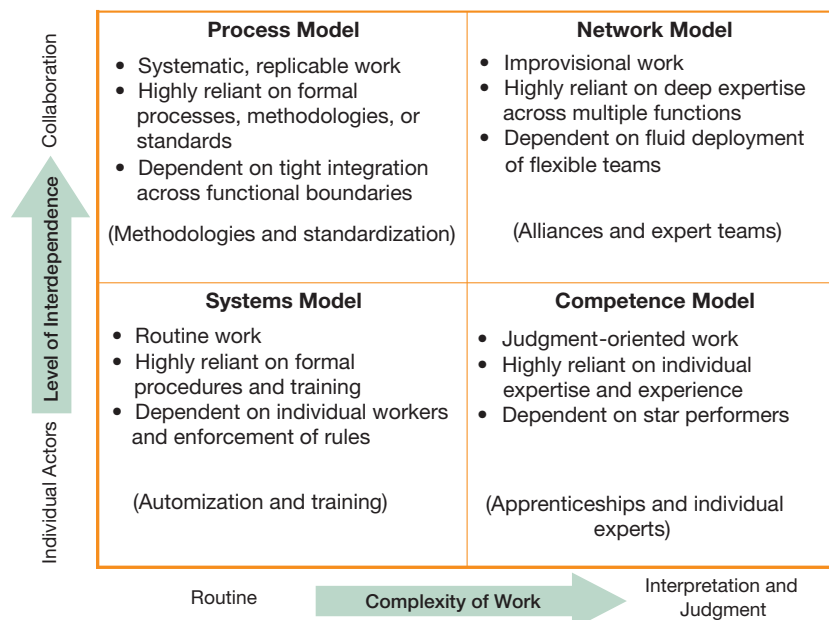
Ultimately, learning must be customized to the circumstances of an organization and the work it conducts. Each organization is different, but the work styles of any organization fall under four models: process, systems, network, and competence. Figure 7 highlights the characteristics of particular work settings and hints thereby at the learning needs of each. In brief, the process and systems models correspond to work settings that are routine and require little interpretation. What is needed to perform tasks is know-how; learning takes place through generalized learning and development training with the help of how-to guides. Evaluation and other reports can help as well. However, the network and competence models

call for much higher levels of judgment and depend on deeper understanding and insight as well as an ability to improvise. Work on policies, strategies, programs, and projects fits in these domains.

## IDEALISM AND REALITY

Without denigrating concepts of systemic thinking—since a better appreciation of the whole and the interrelationship between the parts will lead to more pertinent action—development agencies have a long way to go before they reach the ideal of learning organizations. Table 2 segregates dimensions of the learning organization based on Peter Senge's ideal and the reality in the field mainly from a technicist perspective. ■

**Figure 7: Work Styles Matrices**



Source: Adapted from Pickering, A. 2002. *Knowledge Management: New Research from the Institute for Strategic Change*. Cited in Hovland, I. 2003. *Knowledge Management and Organisational Learning, An International Development Perspective: An Annotated Bibliography*. Working Paper 224. London: Overseas Development Institute. Available: [www.odl.org.uk/publications/working\\_papers/wp224.pdf](http://www.odl.org.uk/publications/working_papers/wp224.pdf)

**Table 2: Idealism and Reality**

The Ideal	The Reality in the Field
<b>Discipline 1: Personal Mastery</b> —individual growth and learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Operational staff members feel undervalued by the organization; there are few individual incentives for learning.</li><li>National staff members and local actors are important sources of local knowledge and vital for learning but are often excluded from learning efforts.</li><li>Southern knowledge is incorporated ad hoc at the tactical, rather than strategic, level.</li></ul>
<b>Discipline 2: Mental Models</b> —explicit articulation of tacit knowledge (ingrained assumptions) about the organization and how it works in the wider world	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Tacit knowledge is all-important at the field level, with field staff showing a bias toward informal learning and social networking.</li><li>Explicit knowledge is seldom in the right form or in the right place at the right time—it is always in catch-up mode.</li></ul>

*continued on next page*



Table 2 *continued*

The Ideal	The Reality in the Field
<b>Discipline 3: Shared Vision</b> and consensus inspiring and motivating staff members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The aid sector lacks clarity and consensus about objectives, responsibilities, relationships, and outcomes at all levels. This carries through to the reference points and frameworks necessary for understanding and assessing performance, and can diminish staff motivation for learning.</li> </ul>
<b>Discipline 4: Team-Based Mastery</b> —learning through improved communication, and openness to creative thinking through reflective conversation and dialogue	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There is inadequate support for management and leadership in the field. High staff turnover and inadequate procedures result in constantly changing teams.</li> <li>Continual demands from head office for information “from the field” create tensions that make learning difficult in many organizations.</li> </ul>
<b>Discipline 5: Systems Thinking</b> —focusing on interrelationships between parts of an organization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The learning cycle of reflection before, during, and after activities is poorly developed and unsupported at the field level, which creates problems for systems-based approaches.</li> <li>Most aid agencies make no attempt to learn from recipient populations—a fundamental omission.</li> </ul>

Source: Ramalingam, B. 2008. *Organizational Learning for Aid, and Learning Aid Organizations*. Available: [www.capacity.org/en/journal/feature/organisational\\_learning\\_for\\_aid\\_and\\_learning\\_aid\\_organisations](http://www.capacity.org/en/journal/feature/organisational_learning_for_aid_and_learning_aid_organisations)

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### KNOWLEDGE SHARING AND LEARNING

Two-way communications that take place simply and effectively build knowledge.



# Disseminating Knowledge Products\*

Dissemination is the interactive process of communicating knowledge to target audiences so that it may be used to lead to change. The challenge is to improve the accessibility of desired knowledge products by those they are intended to reach. This means ensuring physical availability of the product to as large a proportion of the target audience as possible and making the product comprehensible to those who receive it.



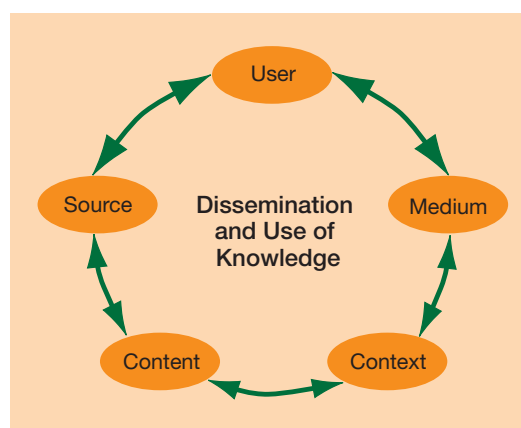
## RATIONALE

The production of knowledge,<sup>1</sup> much of which represents invaluable intellectual capital, lies at the heart of modern organizations. However, the value of any knowledge product hangs on its effective dissemination to—present and future—audiences: without outreach the efforts of knowledge workers are wasted.<sup>2</sup> For this reason, dissemination is a core responsibility of any organization tasked with generating and sharing knowledge products, especially of new kinds of unique (and uniquely valuable) content<sup>3</sup> that are as usable and accessible as possible. Dissemination of knowledge is just as important as its production.<sup>4</sup>

## DEFINITION

At the simplest level, dissemination is best described as the delivering and receiving of a message, the engagement of an individual in a process, or the transfer of a process or product. It is also helpful to think about dissemination in three broadly different ways, viz., dissemination for awareness, for understanding, and for action.<sup>5</sup> Indeed, effective dissemination of a knowledge product will most likely require that it satisfy all three in turn: utilization is the goal.

**Figure: Relationship of Key Elements of Dissemination Leading to Knowledge Utilization**



Source: Author.

## BARRIERS TO DISSEMINATION

Most barriers to dissemination are psychological or social from the onset.<sup>6</sup> But where efforts to disseminate knowledge products are earnest low impact<sup>7</sup> is mainly attributable to poor planning

\* Muriel Ordoñez contributed to these *Knowledge Solutions*.

<sup>1</sup> E.g., know-how, good practices, and intellectual property.

<sup>2</sup> Poor dissemination explains much of the gap between knowledge and practice. Enormous amounts of knowledge are never communicated beyond their immediate circles of interest and remain unused. Diffusion of innovation in health care, for example, is a considerable challenge. (In this complex case, dissemination dictates that particularly close attention be paid to perceptions of the innovation, the characteristics of the people who adopt the innovation or fail to do so, and contextual factors such as communication, incentives, leadership, and management).

<sup>3</sup> Traditional dissemination practices have, on the whole, relied on production of print artifacts through established publishing routes (even though print-based distribution systems retard and limit the development of ideas). Research data, audio, video, and multimedia works, as well as new forms of digital works and scholarly resources, are instances of non-traditional content that must be actively managed for dissemination purposes in a networked environment.

<sup>4</sup> Taken to its logical conclusion, this means that high-performance organizations must employ all existing infrastructure and continue to invest in policy work, as well as in organizational and technological strategies, to build capability to disseminate.

<sup>5</sup> Awareness may foster interest in greater understanding that may, in turn, provide the basis for action.

<sup>6</sup> In an organization, psychological barriers relate to reciprocity, reputation, and altruism. Social barriers relate to organizational culture, and the social networks that frame it. Social factors are the most frequently cited roadblock to knowledge management success. See ADB. 2008. *Notions of Knowledge Management*. Manila. Available: [www.adb.org/documents/information/knowledge-solutions/notions-knowledge-management.pdf](http://www.adb.org/documents/information/knowledge-solutions/notions-knowledge-management.pdf)

<sup>7</sup> Intended impacts are not necessarily the same. Specific objectives might be to influence policy, change practice, contribute to an evidence base, and/or inform target audiences of progress. Obviously, the nature of intended impacts has implications for approaches to dissemination of related knowledge products.

and the absence of a dissemination strategy. (Central to that is recognition that the dissemination process should be interactive, allowing feedback from audiences according to a cyclical model of communications flow.)

**Key Steps.** High-performance organizations (i) adopt a strategic approach to dissemination; (ii) know their target audiences; (iii) formulate generic, viable dissemination strategies that can be amended to suit different purposes; (iv) hit the target; and (v) monitor and evaluate their accomplishments. They do so because they can answer the following questions:

- **What do we want to disseminate?** Dissemination is only achievable and successful if, from the outset, there is a shared vision and common understanding of what it is one wants to disseminate together with a way of describing that to those who stand to benefit from it.
- **What is the target audience and what are we offering it?** It is important to identify and be clear about who the target audience is to map it to one of the categories in the awareness, understanding, and action model. Since target audiences tend to be long rather than short, it is best to concentrate on who, at the very least, needs to be informed, and then prioritize for awareness, understanding, and action. Next, it is essential to think about what benefits the knowledge product will have to offer. Nothing interests a user more than a potential solution to his or her particular problem: the most successful dissemination strategies are those that actively engage target audiences and deliver what they both need and want. One must then examine the knowledge product and think of how it might be presented as a benefit and solution to users.
- **When do we disseminate?** Dissemination exercises have milestones that must be identified and set early. They must also be realistic.
- **What are the most effective ways of disseminating?** Reports are concrete outputs that can be easily evidenced as solid methods of dissemination. But, it is important to explore and evaluate what vehicles meet the needs of target audiences most effectively and appropriately. Varying them will also increase the chances of success.
- **Who might help us disseminate?** Target audiences already have journals, events, professional bodies, and subject associations they engage with. Dissemination will stand a

greater chance of success if one can work through existing channels. Collaborating probably improves the impact of dissemination and reduces costs.

- **How do we prepare our strategy?** The strategy flows from the above to cover (i) the objective of dissemination, (ii) what knowledge product one proposes to disseminate, (iii) target audiences, (iv) benefits to users, (v) dissemination methods and related activities, (vi) timescales and responsibilities, (vii) targets, (viii) costs, and (ix) evaluation and criteria for success.
- **How do we turn our strategy into a dissemination plan?** Producing a coherent dissemination strategy does not necessarily result in effective implementation. A clear set of actions must be articulated covering (i) objective, (ii) target audiences, (iii) methods, (iv) vehicles, (v) timing, and (vi) responsibility.
- **How do we cost our dissemination activities?** Having developed the dissemination strategy and turned it into a dissemination plan, one needs to make sure that each dissemination activity has been carefully costed. It is always possible to obtain estimates of costs for all aspects of dissemination. The different aspects for consideration when running a workshop, for example, will relate among others to venue or room hire; equipment, e.g., overhead projectors, laptops; refreshments; lunch; travel to and from the workshop; publicity materials; and subsidies for participants.
- **How will we know we have been successful?** An effective dissemination strategy will only continue to be effective if it is viewed as an evolving and constantly developing process. The context in which we work changes over the course of our activities and the contexts in which users work are likely to change too.<sup>8</sup> Therefore, it is important to put in place mechanisms for reviewing progress. However, one can only do so if clear targets are established at the outset. One of the most effective ways of establishing targets is to link them to the broad purposes of dissemination: (i) awareness, (ii) support and favorability, (iii) understanding, (iv) involvement, and (v) commitment. In each instance, it will be useful to identify beforehand the (i) target group, (ii) target, (iii) timescale, (iv) reasons for selection, and (v) criteria for success.

<sup>8</sup> The conventional model of knowledge transfer is linear: information flows from a provider to a user via a certain medium. In reality, knowledge transfer is an interactive, multidirectional exchange of know-how, good practices, or intellectual property.



**Table 1: Relative Merits of Development Research Dissemination Pathways**

Dissemination Pathway	Advantage	Disadvantage
<b>Working document</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>May target research findings to particular groups</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Limited access</li> </ul>
<b>Research report</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provides a single reference point for all aspects of the research</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assumes the report is read by a single audience group</li> <li>May be written in an inaccessible manner</li> </ul>
<b>Academic, refereed journal</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Informs the scientific community of findings.</li> <li>Citations lead to wider impacts on intellectual networks</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Limited audience</li> <li>May be written in an inaccessible manner</li> <li>Lacks a practical orientation</li> </ul>
<b>Professional journal</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reaches a wide practitioner community</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Academic rigor may be lower than that in a referred journal</li> </ul>
<b>Stand-alone textbook</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Potential for impact on wide audiences</li> <li>Potential to influence development professionals</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Difficulty in accessing key texts in developing countries</li> <li>Not practice oriented</li> </ul>
<b>Conference, workshop, seminar</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>May allow professionals to learn more</li> <li>Potential for networking</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Expense</li> </ul>
<b>Training manual</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Helps to translate information into knowledge that can be applied</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Limited audience</li> <li>Expense</li> </ul>
<b>Networking</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reaches members who share common interests</li> <li>Reduces “reinvention of the wheel”</li> <li>Potential for interaction, discussion, and review of findings</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Typically low levels of active participation</li> <li>Requires strong incentives for participation</li> <li>Time consuming to operate and manage</li> </ul>
<b>Internet, electronic mail</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Immediate, convenient</li> <li>Wide interest in electronic media</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Access to hardware may be limited in developing countries</li> <li>Potential may be or is temporarily underdeveloped</li> <li>Expense</li> </ul>
<b>Intermediaries</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensures that knowledge is translatable based on local norms</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Problems may arise if research agenda of intermediaries is not consistent with the knowledge product</li> </ul>
<b>Popularization, promotional artifact</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reaches wide audiences</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Core message may be diluted or misinterpreted during the process of popularization</li> </ul>
<b>Publicizing</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reaches wide audiences at relatively low cost</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No control over interpretation of message</li> </ul>
<b>Participatory concept</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Translates research results into practical guidance at the community level</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Time consuming</li> </ul>
<b>Policy briefs</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Potential to influence the decision-making process</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Difficulty in gaining access to decision makers</li> </ul>
<b>Interactive computer presentation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>High impact</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Difficulty in gaining access to decision makers</li> <li>Limited access to hardware</li> <li>Expense</li> </ul>
<b>Demonstration</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>High impact</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Limited audience</li> </ul>

Source: Based on Julie Fisher, Frank Odhiambo, and Andrew Cotton. 2003. *Spreading the Word Further: Guidelines for Disseminating Development Research*. Water, Engineering, and Development Center, Loughborough University.

### Box: Characteristics of a Successful Dissemination Plan

- The dissemination plan reflects the needs of the target audiences. It relies on appropriate form, language, and information content levels.
- The plan incorporates various dissemination techniques such as written, graphical, electronic, print, broadcast, and verbal media. The methods include summary documents; electronic dissemination within the organization and to key informants outside it; cross postings on web pages; press releases; media coverage; flyers, posters, and brochures; letters of thanks to study participants; newsletters to study participants; events and conferences; and seminars. Each method calls for its own format and means of dissemination and includes both proactive and reactive channels—that is, it includes information content that the target audiences have identified as important and information content that the audiences may not know to request but is likely to be of interest. The dissemination techniques are more likely to succeed when their packaging and information content has been influenced by inputs from the target audiences.
- The dissemination plan draws on existing capabilities, resources, relationships, and networks to the maximum extent possible. It also builds the new capabilities, resources, relationships, and networks that the target audience needs.
- The dissemination plan includes effective quality control mechanisms to ensure that the information content is accurate, relevant, representative, and timely.
- The plan identifies the resources required for implementation.
- The plan provides a framework for monitoring and evaluation. It explains how one will know that dissemination activities have been successful. If data is to be gathered, it describes how this will be achieved, when, and who will gather it.

Source: Author.

## LESSONS LEARNED

In their review of organizational experience in improving the impact of knowledge and research, Julie Fisher, Frank Odhiambo, and Andrew Cotton drew five sets of lessons:

**Table 2: Key Lessons of Successful Dissemination**

Area	Key Lesson
<b>Dissemination strategy</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A generic, organizational strategy that can be amended to suit different purposes is the most effective mechanism.</li> <li>• Dissemination planning is best informed by carrying out a user needs' assessment of the target audiences whom one seeks to influence.</li> <li>• Using the experience of all individuals involved in dissemination in an organization leads to a comprehensive strategy.</li> <li>• Internal dissemination is a necessary element of a dissemination strategy as it strengthens overall capacity in this area.</li> </ul>
<b>Target audiences</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A formal target audience information needs assessment (including an understanding of sociocultural factors) generates information on what information (content, style, resource requirements, and language) should be provided and the way in which it should be delivered.</li> <li>• Ensuring local relevance of information results in increases receptiveness by audiences.</li> <li>• Different local versions of information can be produced based on user needs analysis data.</li> </ul>
<b>Dissemination pathways</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A multiple channel dissemination approach reaches the broadest audience.</li> <li>• The mass media can be a useful mass dissemination pathway, if a corresponding information culture prevails in which research and information is distributed in this way.</li> <li>• The potential of electronic information is recognized but this should be supplemented by other dissemination approaches.</li> <li>• Dissemination methods found to be successful in the south but used less frequently by the northern researchers can provide valuable opportunities to reach target audiences.</li> <li>• A useful route of access to target audiences is through intermediaries although careful selection is important.</li> </ul>
<b>Viability and funding issues</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Insufficient funding is the main barrier to a viable dissemination strategy and accurate costs associations attached to the issue of paying for information.</li> <li>• Use of networks provides a means of strengthening the viability of a dissemination strategy for the chosen period.</li> </ul>
<b>Impact issues</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The various dissemination monitoring and evaluation techniques should be pre-tested prior to use.</li> <li>• Indicators of successful uptake of the message are often perceived to be indicators of successful dissemination practice. A combination of direct and proxy indicators can provide an acceptable measure of how well we have reached our audience.</li> </ul>

Source: Compiled from Julie Fisher, Frank Odhiambo, and Andrew Cotton. 2003. *Spreading the Word Further: Guidelines for Disseminating Development Research*. Water, Engineering, and Development Center, Loughborough University.



## FURTHER READING

Julie Fisher, Frank Odhiambo, and Andrew Cotton.  
2003. *Spreading the Word Further: Guidelines  
for Disseminating Development Research*. Water,  
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University.





# Drawing Learning Charters

Despite competing demands, modern organizations should not forget that learning is the best way to meet the challenges of the time. Learning charters demonstrate commitment: they are a touchstone against which provision and practice can be tested and a waymark with which to guide, monitor, and evaluate progress. It is difficult to argue that what learning charters advocate is not worth striving for.



## COMMUNICATING FOR CHANGE

Often, strategic reversals in organizational change are failures of execution. Poor communications explain much. That is because the real power of the vision that underpins change can only be unleashed if institutional commitment is verbalized to frame a desirable future; share core beliefs, common values, and understandings; and help motivate and coordinate the actions that drive transformation.

To spark action, credible, focused, jargon-free, on-time, liberal, face-to-face, and two-way communication<sup>1</sup> in the right context is necessary. Effective visions cannot be imposed on people: they must be set in motion by way of persuasion. Progressively then, communication for change (i) raises awareness and informs stakeholders of vision, progress, and outcomes; (ii) edifies stakeholders regarding their active involvement in the change process and imparts skills, knowledge, and appreciation; and (iii) generates buy-in and a sense of excitement about the transformation.<sup>2</sup> Personnel who communicate well incorporate each day, at every conceivable opportunity, messages that update, educate, and commit. They preach a vision through conversation and storytelling. They continually reaffirm it. The best visions call on the past, relate to the present, and link to the future.

## DRAWING LEARNING CHARTERS

A charter is a written instrument given as evidence of agreement.<sup>3</sup> It can also be a document setting forth the aims and principles of a united group to inform stakeholders in an endeavor and serve as a reference of authority for the future. A clear, concise statement of the direction of an organization that outlines purposes and results is a useful tool with which to stimulate enthusiasm.

For example, the Learning Declaration Group<sup>4</sup> has promoted learning and development for many years. The 13 signatories<sup>5</sup> to its Declaration on Learning, people who have researched and written extensively about effective learning,<sup>6</sup> have isolated the benefits for society, organizations, and individuals. The declaration spells out what these are and invites responses from policy makers; leaders in organizations; teachers, trainers, and developers; and individual learners. The notable tenets of the declaration include:

- Learning reinforces the informed, conscious, and discriminating choices that underpin democracy.
- Learning is the only source of sustainable development.
- Learning to learn is the most fundamental learning of all.
- Learning is the key to developing your identity and your potential.

<sup>1</sup> The pillars of effective communication are (i) simplicity; (ii) metaphor, analogy, and illustration; (iii) multiple forums; (iv) repetition; (v) leadership by example; (vi) explanation of apparent inconsistencies; and (vii) give-and-take.

<sup>2</sup> Depending on the organization, audiences, and the nature of the change, these must be aligned along a commitment curve of contact, awareness, understanding, positive perception, adoption, institutionalization, and internalization.

<sup>3</sup> In numerous instances, that can be a document issued by a sovereign, legislature, or other authority to create a public or private corporation, e.g., a city, college, or bank, and define its privileges and purposes.

<sup>4</sup> See Ian Cunningham. 2006. A Declaration on Learning: How Do You Respond? *Development and Learning in Organizations*. 20 (6). pp. 18–23.

<sup>5</sup> They are Margaret Attwood, Tom Boydell, John Burgoyne, David Clutterbuck, Ian Cunningham, Bob Garratt, Peter Honey, Andrew Mayo, David Megginson, Alan Mumford, Michael Pearn, Mike Pedler, and Robin Wood.

<sup>6</sup> The characteristics of effective learning are reflectiveness, resourcefulness, reciprocity, and resilience.





- Society, and the communities of which it is comprised, survives, adapts, and thrives through developing and sharing learning.
- Regular and rigorous use of learning processes increases everyone's capacity to contribute to the success of organizations by challenging, reshaping, and meeting its goals.
- Learning expands the horizons of who we are and what we can become.

**“He that gives good advice, builds with one hand; he that gives good counsel and example, builds with both; but he that gives good admonition and bad example, builds with one hand and pulls down with the other.”**

—Francis Bacon

Since the first version of the declaration was launched in 1998, the group has received reactions ranging from “It’s not very radical” to “It’s too radical for us to implement.” More critically, others have decried the communication mode of the

declaration—which mixes principles, analyses, and plans of action somewhat indigestibly—or demonstrated its dominant discourses and assumptions. Yet, its avowed intention is only to promote dialogue on learning in organizations, and its originality lies in the fact that very few organizations practice what is suggested in the paper. It poses fascinating questions: specifically, how can policy makers; leaders in organizations; teachers, trainers, and developers; and individual learners maximize the learning ability of people by encouraging and supporting individual and collective learning that enables society, organizations, and individuals to change and adapt more effectively?

### LEARNING FOR CHANGE IN ADB

In 2009, a publication<sup>7</sup> of the Asian Development Bank examined what that organization might say, to what purposes and results, and through what commitments to corporate action, if it were to make a statement of intent on learning for change in ADB. If its staff members were to pledge themselves to individual actions, what might these be? The learning charter that the document champions is not prescriptive, nor is it exhaustive. But it is assuredly specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, and timely.

ADB offers other recent examples of statements on learning. On 31 July 2009, Haruhiko Kuroda—ADB President and

## Figure 1: A Learning Charter for ADB

### Statement of Intent

- ADB embraces the concepts of the learning organization to work better with its developing member countries and cultivate the talent of its staff members.

### Purposes and Results

- To take concrete actions to transform ADB into a learning organization in its policies, strategies, programs, and projects, as well as the business processes and partnerships associated with these, to meet the challenges of the time.
- To support lifelong learning and development by staff members to ensure that ADB is able to attract, retain, and develop the talent it needs in support of its mission.

### Commitments to Corporate Action

- Hold a regular caucus on learning (such as a forum on “Learning in Action”).
- Clarify, simplify, and drive governance for human resources management, including learning and development.
- Make clear the roles and responsibilities for learning and development so that there is clear accountability for results.
- Develop learning and development plans in every department and office, and track and evaluate results.
- Establish a minimum annual commitment of funds or time for learning for employees.

### Commitments to Individual Action

- Be open to different ideas and ways of doing things.
- Build (and model) an environment where discussion, debate, and questioning are encouraged.
- Look out for good practices and capture and share them as appropriate.

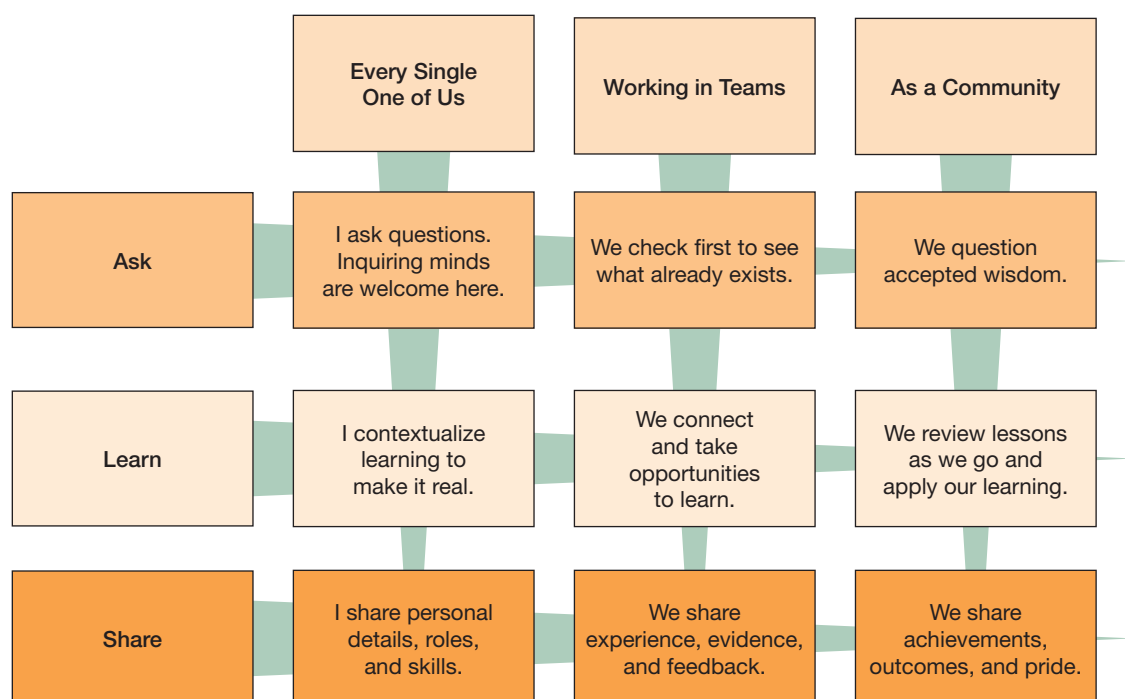
*continued on next page*

<sup>7</sup> ADB. 2009. *Learning for Change in ADB*. Manila. Available: [www.adb.org/documents/books/learning-for-change/default.asp](http://www.adb.org/documents/books/learning-for-change/default.asp)

Figure 1 *continued***Commitments to Individual Action**

- Investigate and master tools, methods, and approaches that might enrich team discussions.
- Seek regular inputs from clients, and benchmark the services provided against the best in ADB and comparable aid agencies.
- Hold regular team meetings to examine what could be done differently, capture lessons learned, and share lessons with others.
- Participate in communities of practice and other value networks, and encourage staff members to do the same.
- Volunteer to coach and mentor younger or new staff members, and build requisite skills continuously.
- Prepare an individual learning and development plan that incorporates my needs and demonstrates what I will do to support those of others.
- Work with my teams to develop team learning and development plans.
- Cooperate with staff members under my supervision to develop individual learning and development plans that reflect a balance of organizational and personal learning and development needs.
- Provide time and resources necessary to live up to the learning and development needs determined and agreed upon.
- Monitor and evaluate the learning and development activities of staff members under my supervision.
- Take care that I have a diversity of talents, skills, and perspectives represented on teams.
- Ensure that staff members in my unit have the chance to share learning and development experiences with others.
- Resist the temptation to divert learning and development funds to other uses or to use operational requirements as an excuse to delay learning.

Source: ADB. 2009. *Learning for Change in ADB*. Manila. Available: [www.adb.org/documents/books/learning-for-change/default.asp](http://www.adb.org/documents/books/learning-for-change/default.asp)

**Figure 2: Your Approach to Knowledge**

Source: ADB. 2009. *Cultivating the Communities of Practice Hosted by ADB*. Manila. Available: [www.adb.org/documents/presentations/knowledge-management-and-learning/cultivating-communities-of-practice.pdf](http://www.adb.org/documents/presentations/knowledge-management-and-learning/cultivating-communities-of-practice.pdf)



concurrent Chairperson of ADB's Board of Directors—approved *Enhancing Knowledge Management Under Strategy 2020*<sup>8</sup> to advance the knowledge management agenda under *Strategy 2020: The Long-Term Strategic Framework of the Asian Development Bank (2008–2020)*.<sup>9</sup> Four pillars will support the plan of action: (i) sharpening the knowledge focus in all ADB operations, (ii) promoting and empowering communities of practice for knowledge capture and sharing, (iii) strengthening external knowledge partnerships to develop and disseminate knowledge, and (iv) scaling up staff development programs to improve technical skills and manage knowledge. In relation to the second, ADB's Knowledge Management Center proposed for adoption by ADB's

communities of practice a dynamic, interactive, and organic framework that articulates the need to ask, learn, and share at individual, team, and community levels. From a knowledge sharing and learning perspective, translating the framework into inputs, activities, and outputs for key outcomes will help maintain focus on the things that matter to communities of practice and serve the needs and aspirations of their members. ■

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ADB. 2009. *Learning for Change in ADB*. Manila. Available: [www.adb.org/documents/books/learning-for-change/default.asp](http://www.adb.org/documents/books/learning-for-change/default.asp)

<sup>8</sup> See ADB. 2009. *Enhancing Knowledge Management Strategies*. Manila. Available: [www.adb.org/documents/information/knowledge-solutions/enhancing-knowledge-management-strategies.pdf](http://www.adb.org/documents/information/knowledge-solutions/enhancing-knowledge-management-strategies.pdf)

<sup>9</sup> ADB. 2008. *Strategy 2020: The Long-Term Strategic Framework of the Asian Development Bank (2008–2020)*. Manila. Available: [www.adb.org/documents/policies/strategy2020/strategy2020.pdf](http://www.adb.org/documents/policies/strategy2020/strategy2020.pdf)





# Embracing Failure

Success is a process and failure on the way is an opportunity.  
Successful individuals, groups, and organizations fail well.



## LIVING ON THE EDGE

Infinite complexity, endless possibilities, and resulting constant change characterize the 21st century. More intimately and faster than ever before, the realms of environment, economy, society, polity, and technology coevolve in adaptive systems. The times demand the ability to take risks, embrace failure, and move on.

Developing a culture of intelligent experimentation and failure analysis is no longer an option. Individuals, groups, and organizations must create, innovate, and reflect to generate the radical solutions they need to tackle challenges in markets, industries, organizations, geographies, intellectual disciplines, and generations. To accomplish this, they must learn to learn and learn to unlearn before, during, and after.<sup>1</sup>

## LEARNING FROM CHILDREN

Success and failure are borne of the same mother. Children are not afraid to fall short. They fail countless times at standing, walking, talking, riding a bicycle, tying shoelaces, and other important tasks. But they are resilient and never give up. They embrace failure and adapt until they achieve the desired result. Playing is a vital part of their lives.<sup>2</sup> It leads to making (constructing) in a social world that values participation and that leads to knowing. Is it because they no longer play that adults are afraid to fail? After all, is play not the opposite of work?

## ALLAYING ADULT FEARS

Failure is something organizations shy away from. Instead of learning from failure in detail, adults profess they will never repeat that mistake again. Their fear is understandable: they are paid to succeed, not fail.<sup>3</sup> Hence, errors can only reflect negatively on their intelligence, chipping away at self-confidence and self-esteem. And so, despite the occasional exhortation inviting mistakes—“If you’re not making mistakes, you’re not trying hard enough”—personnel knows that mistakes are more often punished than rewarded. As a result, many are reluctant to admit inadequacies, weaknesses, mistakes, and their distinct needs (everyone has different talents and learning styles) and take as few chances as possible. This inhibits individual and collective growth and leads to paralysis, procrastination, and purposelessness.

Organizations cannot promote a passion for learning and pursue courses of action that frustrate it. In a learning culture or learning organization, failures are considered opportunities to learn, not recrimination—worse still in instances, point scoring. (To this effect, some draw learning charters.) If failure is branded as unacceptable, learning is made impossible—with the paradoxical result that failure will inevitably recur, if not prevail. The key to establishing learning systems is tolerance of failure, continuous feedback on effectiveness,<sup>4</sup> and willingness to foster creativity and innovation. Psychological safety,

<sup>1</sup> For most of the 20th century, learning was about acquiring skills, usually through knowledge transfer. It was about learning to be. In a world of flux, it must develop as a theory of how one becomes time and again.

<sup>2</sup> Play provides the opportunity to experiment and fail—to fail yet continue to play with different outcomes. Playing is always about becoming, not being.

<sup>3</sup> It follows that compensation is based on tasks well done, not spectacular (and sometimes costly) failures that might eventually produce breakthroughs.



appreciation of differences, receptiveness to new ideas, and time for reflection are prerequisites to this.

## THE ATTRIBUTES OF FAILURE

If success and failure are relatives, failure is not inherently bad. Indeed, it has many advantages. Failure softens hearts, develops maturity, broadens thinking, offers insights, prompts innovation, reveals ability, inspires, reinforces the need for risk, builds courage, fortifies, opens other opportunities, brings unexpected benefits, pushes the envelope of future performance, liberates, makes success sweeter, and is preferable to bitterness and regret. However, to better grasp the attributes of failure and treat it as a friend, we should not define them (nor those of success) narrowly. Failure is best conceptualized as deviation from expected and desired results.<sup>5</sup>

## FAILING WELL

Successful individuals, groups, and organizations fail much more than they succeed. However, their larger success derives from the fact that they fail well. The difference lies in their perception of and their response to failure.<sup>6</sup> In a word, they treat it as a process. They

- appreciate that failure is not avoidable, objective, a single event, a stigma, the enemy, or final;
- understand why they made the decision they took based on the information they had;
- assess their decisions based on what they knew at the time;
- judge the systemic errors they committed in under- or overestimating difficulties, costs, timelines, abilities, etc.;
- examine whether they had all the information they needed;
- investigate what successes are contained in the failure and draw dividends;
- plan to obtain more and better information to underpin future decisions;
- use the experience to build and work from strengths; and
- set a new goal, order their plan, take action, reevaluate progress, and adjust continually.

Literature has not yet clearly described the process of learning from failure in organizations. (For individuals, it is in any event

**“I didn’t see it then, but it turned out that getting fired from Apple was the best thing that could have ever happened to me. The heaviness of being successful was replaced by the lightness of being a beginner again, less sure about everything. It freed me to enter one of the most creative periods of my life.”**

— Steve Jobs

shaped by individual experience, knowledge, attitudes, skills, aspirations, and behaviors.)<sup>7</sup> Moreover, the significance of learning is not necessarily proportional to the scope of failure. Simply put, however, the process of embracing failure must involve identifying mishaps; discussing and analyzing them in a spirit of inquiry and openness; and dealing with controversy and disagreement productively. Needless to say, progress will hinge on the existence of shared, constructive beliefs, for instance, vis-à-vis performance outcomes. These will, in turn, depend on effective coaching and mentoring, clear direction, and a supportive and enabling workplace environment and culture.<sup>8</sup> The barriers to this lie at individual, group, and organizational levels.

## EMBRACING FAILURE

In the modern world, a mind shift we need is realization that failure is the rule rather than the exception. This begs intellectual honesty. Failure is a promising area of investigation because it is such a common experience. Yet, it is a secret that is never spoken out loud. One hundred years ago, Vilfredo Pareto (1848–1923), an Italian engineer, economist, sociologist, and philosopher, demanded: “Give me a fruitful error any time, full of seeds, bursting with its own corrections. You can keep your sterile truth for yourself.” Failing well breeds success. It is not difficult to be definitely tentative, turn means into ends, be less prejudiced but more discriminatory, transform work into play, and celebrate mistakes. Why wait? ■

<sup>4</sup> Over the years, independent and self-evaluations have rightly found a role in discovering what results are being achieved, what improvements should be considered, and what is being learned. However, evaluation is still something of a niche occupation and the value it adds is conditioned by the objective specified. There are two competing, often mutually exclusive, purposes to evaluation. Evaluation for accountability centers on the past. Evaluation for learning seeks to improve future performance. Accordingly, there are differences in basic aim, emphasis, audiences, selection of topics, the status of evaluation, the status of evaluators, the significance of data from evaluations, and the importance ascribed to as well as the manner of feedback. What is more, even organizations that profess to evaluate for learning still lean heavily on evaluation for accountability in their methodologies and practices.

<sup>5</sup> This includes both avoidable errors and unavoidable negative outcomes of experimentation and risk taking. It also includes interpersonal failures arising from misunderstanding and conflict.

<sup>6</sup> Many individuals deemed highly successful, including some Nobel prize winners, set great store by their mistakes. This impacts every aspect of their lives. They appreciate that success is a process and that failure on the way is an opportunity. They concentrate on engaging, not just achieving. Struggles, periods of confusion, wrong turns, and dead ends are not cause for alarm; they are expected—indeed inevitable—parts of the journey. (Knowledge is much more than a stock. It is deeply contextual and sparked by circumstance. Hence, there is a natural flow to its creation, disruption, and use. The context can be simple, complicated, complex, or chaotic and related decisions must try to match the context’s characteristics.) Highly successful individuals have a high tolerance for failure because they have developed the skill of learning to fail.

<sup>7</sup> Stating the obvious, individuals display more differences in perception, sense making, estimation, and attribution than groups or organizations do.

<sup>8</sup> Next, tools and techniques can be applied to enhance recognition of the value of knowledge developed from experience and enrich sense making. They include action learning sets, after-action reviews and retrospects, the Five Whys technique, mind maps, the Most Significant Change technique, peer assists, the Reframing Matrix, the SCAMPER technique, the Six Thinking Hats technique, social network analysis, and storytelling, among others.

### Box 1: Are You Ready to Embrace Failure?

1. Do you keep your mistakes to yourself?
2. Do you try new things only if you are sure you can succeed?
3. Do you become very cautious after something does not work out?
4. Do you try to immediately forget your failures?
5. Do you think failure is shameful?

If you have answered “Yes” to one or more of these questions, you are probably not ready to embrace failure. To successfully fail, you must take every aspect of failure to heart and learn from your mistakes to the full.

Source: Adapted from CNBC.com. 2008. Quiz: Are You Ready To Embrace Failure? 27 May. Available: [www.cnbc.com/id/24846487](http://www.cnbc.com/id/24846487)

### Box 2: Inspirations for Embracing Failure

*Truth will sooner come out of error than from confusion.*  
—Francis Bacon

*Failure is the condiment that gives success its flavor.*  
—Truman Capote

*’Tis the maddest trick a man can ever play in his whole life, to let his breath sneak out of his body without any more ado, and without so much as a rap o’er the pate, or a kick of the guts; to go out like the snuff of a farthing candle, and die merely of the mulligrubs, or the sullens.*  
—Miguel de Cervantes

*Success consists of going from failure to failure without loss of enthusiasm.*  
—Winston Churchill

*You will do foolish things, but do them with enthusiasm.*  
—Colette

*Mistakes are almost always of a sacred nature. Never try to correct them. On the contrary: rationalize them, understand them thoroughly. After that, it will be possible for you to sublimate them.*  
—Salvador Dali



### Box 3: More Inspirations for Embracing Failure

*I have not failed. I've just found 10,000 ways that won't work.*  
—Thomas Edison

*Even a mistake may turn out to be the one thing necessary to a worthwhile achievement.*  
—Henry Ford

*A man's errors are his portals of discovery.*  
—James Joyce

*Don't be afraid to make a mistake. But make sure you don't make the same mistake twice.*  
—Akio Morita

*It is not the critic who counts, not the man who points out how the strong man stumbled, or where the doer of deeds could have done better. The credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena, whose face is marred by dust and sweat and blood, who strives valiantly, who errs and comes short again and again, who knows the great enthusiasms, the great devotions, and spends himself in a worthy cause, who at best knows achievement and who at the worst if he fails at least fails while daring greatly so that his place shall never be with those cold and timid souls who know neither victory nor defeat.*  
—Theodore Roosevelt

*Would you like me to give you a formula for... success? It's quite simple, really. Double your rate of failure. You're thinking of failure as the enemy of success. But it isn't at all... you can be discouraged by failure—or you can learn from it. So go ahead and make mistakes. Make all you can. Because, remember that's where you'll find success. On the far side.*  
—Thomas J. Watson

### FURTHER READING

- Ralph Heath. 2009. *Celebrating Failure: The Power of Taking Risks, Making Mistakes and Thinking Big*. The Career Press.
- John Maxwell. 2000. *Failing Forward: Turning Mistakes into Stepping Stones for Success*. Thomas Nelson, Inc.
- Olivier Serrat. 2008. *Increasing Value Added from Operations Evaluation*. Manila: ADB. Unpublished.







# Enriching Policy with Research\*

The failure of researchers to link evidence to policy and practice produces evidence that no one uses, impedes innovation, and leads to mediocre or even detrimental development policies. To help improve the definition, design, and implementation of policy research, researchers should adopt a strategic outcome-oriented approach.



## THE PROMISE OF RESEARCH IN DEVELOPMENT

In the 2010s, global, regional, and national challenges and their local effects will impact all and the poorest most.<sup>1</sup> In the development sector, research in science, technologies, and ideas can make a difference if they identify what tools, methods, and approaches no longer work; test new ways of doing things; and link knowledge of that in ways that inform policy and practice. (Here, policy is taken to mean a deliberate course of action to guide decisions and achieve outcomes.)<sup>2</sup>

Research, the systematic effort to increase the stock of knowledge, has innumerable applications. For this reason, educational institutions, governments, and philanthropic organizations—the three major purveyors of money—spend billions of dollars on research every year. A propos developing countries, where utilitarian science policy<sup>3</sup> is favored,

proponents contend persuasively that it can help save lives, reduce poverty, and improve the quality of human existence.<sup>4</sup> (Utilitarian research is more likely to be funded as it costs less and pledges more.)

Even so, if most people agree that science and research deserve support, consensus about their benefits quickly breaks down beyond that. In truth, researchers routinely miss opportunities to turn their inquiries into lasting change. The cause of this is the weak rapport between their investigations and recommendations and the real world of policy making. (In the meantime, practitioners just get on with it.) A non-linear analytical and practical framework to enrich policy with research is missing.<sup>5</sup> These *Knowledge Solutions* showcase (and draw liberally from) the work that the Overseas Development Institute<sup>6</sup> conducts to bridge research and policy, and help thereby improve practice for better outcomes.

\* Arnaldo Pellini contributed to these *Knowledge Solutions*.

<sup>1</sup> In aid agencies, the short list includes climate and environment, food and agriculture, health, education, governance and social development, growth and investment, and trade. The *Knowledge Solutions* on sparking social innovations paint a fuller (and darker) picture.

<sup>2</sup> Policy change can be (i) discursive—involving new concepts and terminology, (ii) procedural—altering the way policy makers do things, (iii) content-oriented—inducing modifications in strategy or policy documents, or (iv) behavioral—transforming attitudes.

<sup>3</sup> Utilitarian science prioritizes projects that can reduce large amounts of suffering for many people. Basic science, on the other hand, tries to stimulate breakthroughs. Scholastic conservation, the third kind of science policy, aims to efficiently impart all available knowledge to whoever can use it. Monumental science sponsors science for the sake of science, often through large projects. Technology development, the fifth branch of science policy, advances the application of science mainly through engineering.

<sup>4</sup> The Department for International Development of the United Kingdom, for one, announced in 2008 that it would double its commitment and invest up to £1 billion in development research over the next 5 years. (It will channel that to six priority areas: growth; sustainable agriculture, particularly in Africa; climate change; health; governance in challenging environments; and future challenges and opportunities.)

<sup>5</sup> Policy processes are complex and rarely linear or logical: simply presenting information to policy makers and expecting them to act upon it is not likely to work. Summarizing the gap, researchers typically propound “scientific” (objective) evidence that is proven empirically and theoretically driven, even if it is conducted over as long as it takes and is then offered with caveats and qualifications. However, policy makers need evidence that is “colloquial” (linked to context); seems policy relevant, reasonable, and timely; and delivers a clear message. Put differently, in a chaos of purposes and accidents, policy makers do not—certainly, not often—identify the problem, commission research, analyze the results, choose the best option, establish the policy, implement the policy, and monitor evaluate the policy. They are not at all preoccupied with the rational implementation of so-called “decisions” through selected strategies. Source: Phil Davies. 2005. Evidence-Based Policy at the Cabinet Office. Impact and Insight Workshops. 17 October. London. Overseas Development Institute. Available: [www.odl.org.uk/rapid/events/impact\\_insight/presentation\\_1/davies.html](http://www.odl.org.uk/rapid/events/impact_insight/presentation_1/davies.html)

<sup>6</sup> The Overseas Development Institute is the United Kingdom’s leading independent think tank on international development and humanitarian issues. Thanks to its Research and Policy in Development program, the institute works with partners in developing and developed countries at the intersection of research, policy, and practice to promote better outcomes for the poor. The program seeks to clarify (i) the role of knowledge in policy and practice, and (ii) the skills and capacities needed for researchers and organizations to effectively translate knowledge into action.



**“ The important thing in science is not so much to obtain new facts as to discover new ways of thinking about them. ”**

—Lawrence Bragg

## BRIDGING RESEARCH AND POLICY

Theory would have decision makers know what kinds of research—that have already delivered results—can help them make the right choices. It would have them base these on the best experience and knowledge available. Yet, reality begs to differ: poor research circulates and is acted upon while good research is ignored and disappears. Why?

The question is potent. One cannot just transport research to the policy sphere. In a world shaped by complexity, policy makers have to deal with the pros and cons of policy decisions daily. Various interrelated factors interact dynamically to determine what sort of evidence, namely, information indicating whether a belief or assertion is true or valid, is likely to be adopted by policy makers who some see are driven by the Five S's of speed, superficiality, spin, secrecy, and scientific ignorance.<sup>7</sup>

According to the Overseas Development Institute, the factors that define courses of action fall into three overlapping areas: (i) the political context, (ii) the evidence, and (iii) the links between policy and research communities, within a fourth set of factors: external influences. Admittedly, this framework is a generic, perhaps ideal, explanatory model: in instances, there will not be much overlap between the different spheres; in others the overlap may vary considerably. Notwithstanding, the framework holds explanatory power. It provides clear (yet flexible) guidance as to what researchers need to know, what they need to do, and how they should go about it. It suggests that research-based and other forms of evidence is more likely to enrich policy and thence (hopefully) practice if:

- It fits within the political and institutional limits and pressures of policy makers, and resonates with their assumptions, or sufficient pressure is exerted to challenge them.
- The evidence is credible and convincing, provides practical solutions to pressing policy problems, and is packaged to attract the interest of policy makers.
- Researchers and policy makers share common networks, trust one another, and communicate effectively.

In brief, by making more informed, strategic choices, researchers can maximize the chances that evidence will impact policy and practice.

**“ That theory is worthless. It isn't even wrong! ”**

—Wolfgang Pauli

## GROOMING POLICY ENTREPRENEURS

Researchers live in a competitive environment. To remain competitive, they must become entrepreneurs who (i) operate effectively in highly political environments; (ii) distill powerful policy messages from the results of research; (iii) use networks, hubs, and partnerships and build coalitions to work effectively with all stakeholders; and (iv) maintain long-term programs that pull all of these together. If they have clear intent,<sup>8</sup> they should equip themselves with skills: they need to be fixers, storytellers, networkers, and engineers. This means they probably need to work in multidisciplinary teams with others who possess such skills.

None of this is easy. The Overseas Development Institute<sup>9</sup> cautions that grooming policy entrepreneurs (or turning research institutes or departments into policy-focused think tanks) involves a fundamental reorientation from academic achievement to policy engagement. This entails grappling with the policy community, developing a research agenda focusing on policy issues rather than academic interests, acquiring new skills or building multidisciplinary teams, establishing new internal systems and incentives, spending much more on communications, producing a different range of outputs, and working in partnerships and networks. It may even call for radically different funding models.

**“ In science the credit goes to the man who convinces the world, not the man to whom the idea first occurs. ”**

—Francis Darwin

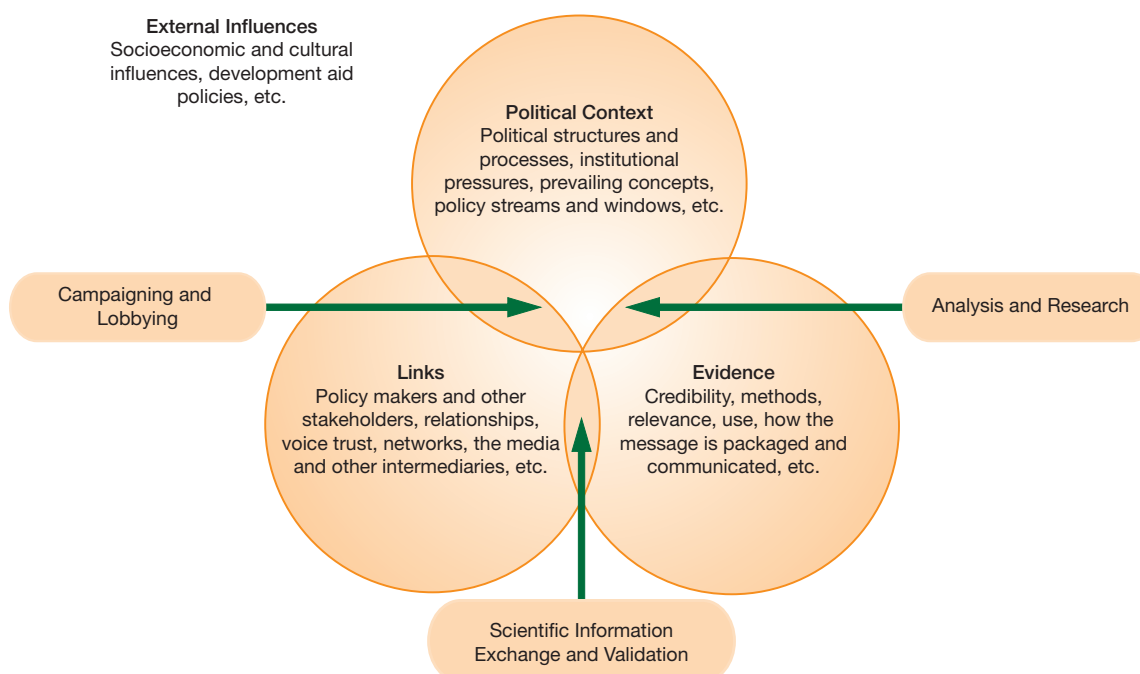
## THE RAPID OUTCOME MAPPING APPROACH

The relationship between research, policy, and practice is complex, multi-factoral, non-linear, and highly context-specific—what works in a situation may not in another. What

<sup>7</sup> This indictment needs moderation. Factors other than the Five S's and evidence condition uptake: they are experience and expertise, judgment, values and policy context, pragmatics and contingencies, resources, habits and tradition, and lobbyists and pressure groups. Source: Vincent Cable. 2003. Does Evidence Matter? Meeting Series. 7 May. London. Overseas Development Institute. Available: [www.odl.org.uk/rapid/meetings/evidence/presentation\\_3/cable.html](http://www.odl.org.uk/rapid/meetings/evidence/presentation_3/cable.html)

<sup>8</sup> To have intent, one needs to know what one wants to do and really want to do it. This demands that research institutes (or departments) have a clear policy objective; focused research; more communications that include simple, unexpected, concrete, credible, and emotional stories; the right incentives; the right systems; and that they engage.

<sup>9</sup> John Young and Enrique Mendizabal. 2009. Helping Researchers Become Policy Entrepreneurs. Overseas Development Institute. Briefing Paper. Available: [www.odl.org.uk/resources/download/1127.pdf](http://www.odl.org.uk/resources/download/1127.pdf)

**Figure 1: The RAPID Framework: Context, Evidence, and Links**

Source: Overseas Development Institute. 2010. Available: [www.health-policy-systems.com/content/7/1/26](http://www.health-policy-systems.com/content/7/1/26)

is more, traditional project management tools such as cost-benefit analysis and logical frameworks fail to account for complexity.

The Overseas Development Institute's RAPID Outcome Mapping Approach draws on concepts of complexity, outcome mapping tools developed by the International Development Research Center, and other tools for policy engagement to provide policy entrepreneurs with more information about the context they are operating in and enable them to make better strategic choices (and be better placed to take advantage of unexpected policy windows and opportunities). The approach comprises distinct steps, although not all will be needed in all situations:

- **Define a clear, overarching policy objective.** Influencing objectives need not be limited to facilitating changes in the written content of government policies. The agenda may also include discursive, procedural, attitudinal, and behavioral changes.
- **Map the policy context.** Mapping the policy context around the issue means identifying key factors that may influence the policy process. How do policies influence the local political context? How do policy makers perceive the problem? Is there political interest in change in the country? Is there enough of the right sort of evidence to convince

them of the need for change? How is it presented? Who are the key organizations and individuals with access to policy makers? What is the donor's agenda where external actors are involved? Are there existing networks to use?

- **Identify the key stakeholders.** Identifying the key influential stakeholders and target audiences involves determining what are their positions and interests in relation to the policy objective. Some can be very interested and aligned and can be considered natural allies for change. Other can be interested, though not yet aligned, and can yet be brought into the fold of reformers so they do not present obstacles.
- **Identify desired behavioral changes.** Developing a theory of change entails describing precisely the current behavior and the behavior that is needed, if the key influential stakeholders are to contribute to the achievement of the desired policy objective. It also calls for short- and medium-term step-changes that can be monitored to ensure that the priority stakeholders are moving in the right direction and responding to the efforts of the change program.
- **Develop a strategy.** Developing a strategy entails spelling out milestone changes in the policy change process. Force field analysis is a flexible tool that can be used to further understand the forces supporting and opposing the desired policy change and suggest concrete responses.



**Table: How to Influence Policy and Practice**

What You Need to Know	What You Need to Do	How to Do It
<b>Political Context</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Who are the key policy makers?</li> <li>Is there a demand for research and new ideas among them?</li> <li>What are the sources of resistance to evidence-based policy making?</li> <li>What is the policy-making environment? (What are its structures, processes, legal and policy framework?)</li> <li>What are the opportunities and timing for input into formal processes?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Get to know the policy makers, their agendas, and their constraints.</li> <li>Identify potential supporters and opponents.</li> <li>Keep an eye on the horizon and prepare for opportunities in regular policy processes.</li> <li>Look out for, and react to, unexpected policy windows.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work with the policy makers.</li> <li>Seek commissions.</li> <li>Line up research programs with high-profile policy events.</li> <li>Reserve resources to be able to move quickly to respond to policy windows.</li> <li>Allow sufficient time and resources.</li> </ul>
<b>Evidence</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What is the current theory?</li> <li>What are the prevailing narratives?</li> <li>How divergent is the new evidence?</li> <li>What sort of evidence will convince policy makers?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establish credibility over the long term.</li> <li>Provide practical solutions to problems.</li> <li>Establish legitimacy.</li> <li>Build a convincing case and present clear policy options.</li> <li>Package new ideas in familiar theory or narratives.</li> <li>Communicate effectively.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Build up programs of high-quality work.</li> <li>Action-research and pilot projects to demonstrate benefits of new approaches.</li> <li>Use participatory approaches to help with legitimacy and implementation.</li> <li>Establish a clear strategy for communication from start.</li> <li>Conduct face-to-face communication.</li> </ul>
<b>Links</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Who are the key stakeholders?</li> <li>What links and networks exist between them?</li> <li>Who are the intermediaries and what influence do they have?</li> <li>Whose side are they on?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Get to know the other stakeholders.</li> <li>Establish a presence in existing networks.</li> <li>Build coalitions with like-minded stakeholders.</li> <li>Build new policy networks.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Forge partnerships between researchers, policy makers, and policy end users.</li> <li>Identify key networkers and salesmen.</li> <li>Use informal contacts.</li> </ul>
<b>External Influences</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Who are the main international actors in the policy process?</li> <li>What influence do they have?</li> <li>What are their aid priorities?</li> <li>What are their research priorities and mechanisms?</li> <li>What are the policies of the donors funding the research?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Get to know the donors, their priorities, and their constraints.</li> <li>Identify potential supporters, key individuals, and networks.</li> <li>Establish credibility.</li> <li>Keep an eye on donor policy and look out for policy windows.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop extensive background on donor policies.</li> <li>Orient communications to suit donor priorities and language.</li> <li>Try to work with the donors and seek commissions.</li> <li>Contact key individuals regularly.</li> </ul>

Source: Overseas Development Institute. 2004. Bridging Research and Policy in International Development. Briefing Paper. Available: [www.odi.org.uk/resources/download/159.pdf](http://www.odi.org.uk/resources/download/159.pdf)

- Analyze internal capacity to effect change.** To operationalize a strategy, one must ensure the engagement team has the competencies required. In other words, the team must have the set of systems, processes, and skills that can help inform or involve policy makers in research. The information gathered should prove useful in starting tangible actions to meet the desired policy objective. The information gathered up to this point can then be used to establish an action plan.
- Establish a monitoring and learning framework.** The final step is to develop a monitoring and learning system not only to track progress, make necessary adjustments, and assess the effectiveness of the approach, but also to learn lessons for the future. Crucial to the collection of knowledge is sharing it and using it. ■

### Box: Strengthening Research Communication at the Viet Nam Academy of Social Sciences

The Support for Effective Policy Making Through the Development of Scientific Evidence Based Research project will last until mid-2011 and has been implemented since 2008 by the Viet Nam Academy of Social Sciences. Funding is provided by the United Nations Development Programme through three mutually reinforcing streams of work: (i) strengthening research management capacity, (ii) carrying out research using the human development paradigm, and (iii) supporting researchers in linking their research with policy processes. The Overseas Development Institute is responsible for the third stream.

The Viet Nam Academy of Social Sciences hosts 30 institutes and about 1,500 researchers. A needs assessment conducted in June 2009 showed that since 2005 demand on the academy for policy research has increased. The demand is greater when policy windows open due to important policy events, such as the National Congress of the Communist Party (every 5 years) or when the National Assembly convenes (twice a year).

Not surprisingly, the results of the assessment showed that the academy's researchers are perceived to have a good competency with research methods. Moreover, several institute directors mentioned that they are involved in policy making or policy discussions through their personal networks and linkages with policy makers. The results showed also an awareness of the

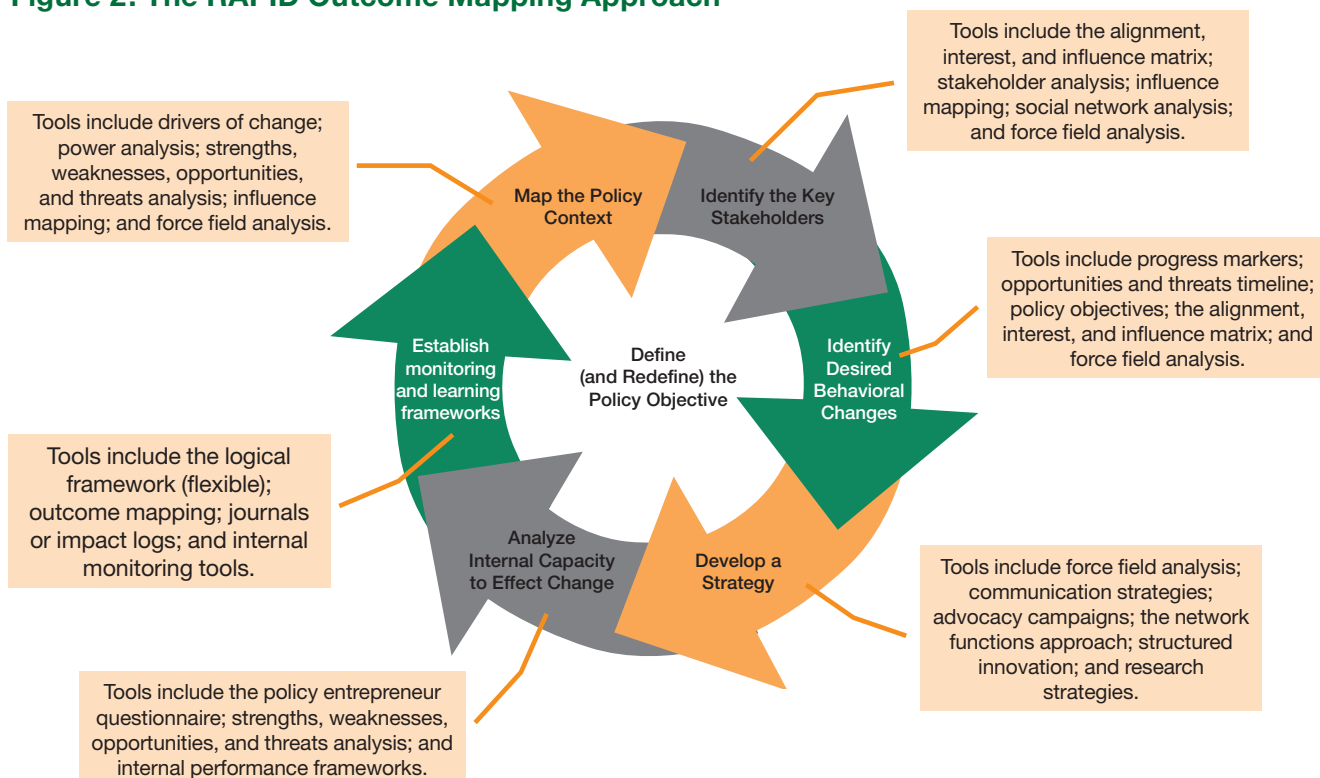
meaning of "evidence-based policy." However, only 11% (out of a total of 700) of the respondents of the survey put policy influencing as the key focus of their research. The majority of the academy's researchers do not adopt a specific strategy to reach a policy audience with the results of their research.

As the main channel to reach policy makers are institute directors, the capacity building conducted in the academy so far focuses on planning and producing research communication outputs such as policy briefs, research briefs, and stories of change. These will help researchers and directors synthesize research results and provide policy that are then to be communicated to policy makers. Information and communication technology is also being introduced as a way for researchers to better collaborate in research projects as well as in sharing research results.

During the needs assessment conducted in the academy, one respondent recognized that "researchers have the habit of making things complicated and bore the audience." There is therefore a growing need for researchers to be equipped with knowledge about "ways to simplify messages for different audiences." In other words, as mentioned by one institute director, there is a need for researchers "to learn about simplicity." This is what the Support for Effective Policy Making Through the Development of Scientific Evidence Based Research project aims to achieve.

Source: Authors.

**Figure 2: The RAPID Outcome Mapping Approach**



Source: Overseas Development Institute. 2009. Helping Researchers Become Policy Entrepreneurs. Briefing Paper. Available: [www.odi.org.uk/resources/download/1127.pdf](http://www.odi.org.uk/resources/download/1127.pdf)



## FURTHER READING

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# Harnessing Creativity and Innovation in the Workplace<sup>1</sup>

Creativity plays a critical role in the innovation process, and innovation that markets value is a creator and sustainer of performance and change. In organizations, stimulants and obstacles to creativity drive or impede enterprise.



## INTRODUCTION

Creativity has always been at the heart of human endeavor. Allied to innovation, which creates unexpected value, it is now recognized as central to organizational performance. (Some hold that the capacity to harness intellectual and social capital—and to convert that into novel and appropriate things—has become the critical organizational requirement of the age.) The shift to knowledge economies has been abrupt and there is a flurry of interest in creativity and innovation in the workplace. Innovation is considered, quite simply, an imperative for organizational survival. It may even be the key to some of the biggest challenges facing the world, such as global warming and sustainable development. Notwithstanding,

**“There is no doubt that creativity is the most important human resource of all. Without creativity, there would be no progress, and we would be forever repeating the same patterns.”**

—Edward de Bono

we are still far from a theory of organizational creativity; the avenues for promising research that might contribute to its emergence are innumerable because of the increasing use of systems approaches and the growing number of agents involved in knowledge flows.<sup>2</sup>

## DEFINITIONS

Creativity<sup>3</sup> is the mental and social process—fuelled by conscious or unconscious insight—of generating ideas, concepts, and associations.<sup>4</sup> Innovation<sup>5</sup> is the successful<sup>6</sup> exploitation of new ideas: it is a profitable outcome of the creative process, which involves generating and applying in a specific context products, services, procedures, and processes that are desirable and viable. Naturally, people who create and people who innovate can have different attributes and perspectives.

## THE CHALLENGE

It follows, then, that innovation begins with creativity. In the world of organizations, be they private or public, lack of either leads to stagnation, and leaves an organization unable to

<sup>1</sup> These *Knowledge Solutions* do not discuss intellectual property, the new knowledge that arises out of the innovation process, nor the management systems that identify, protect, value, manage, and audit an organization's intellectual property, e.g., copyrights, trademarks, patents, etc.

<sup>2</sup> Usefully, given the plethora of opportunities, systemized research might cover four distinct stages: (i) ideas capture, (ii) growth and development, (iii) demonstration, and (iv) application. In general, little work has been done on what types of innovation have the biggest or most significant impact, and in what contexts.

<sup>3</sup> Dictionary.com defines creativity as “the ability to transcend traditional ideas, rules, patterns, relationships, or the like, and to create meaningful new ideas, forms, methods, interpretations, etc.; originality, progressiveness, or imagination.”

<sup>4</sup> Creativity was once considered the province of artists, scientists, and writers. But the creative urge can express itself elsewhere and need not be limited by the job description. There is variety in typologies of creative people too: they can be quick and dramatic, or careful and quiet. It is also true that most new ideas are not flashes of inspiration in an inventor's head; they come from how people identify, create, store, share, and use knowledge. According to the Snowflake Model of Creativity of David Perkins, developed in the 1980s, the six common traits of creative people are (i) a strong commitment to a personal aesthetic, (ii) the ability to excel in finding solutions, (iii) mental mobility, (iv) a willingness to take risks (and the ability to accept failure), (v) objectivity, and (vi) inner motivation. The first three traits are largely cognitive; the last three are dispositional attributes. Because none of the six is thought to be genetic, Perkins argued that creativity can be taught, or at least encouraged.

<sup>5</sup> Dictionary.com defines innovation as “the act of innovating; [the] introduction of new things or methods.”

<sup>6</sup> Success, of course, should be defined by quantitative and qualitative indicators. In addition to market share and reduced costs, for instance, scale and permanence can serve among others.





perform or meet change.<sup>7</sup> However, creative thinking cannot be turned on and off at the flick of a switch. And innovation does not occur in a vacuum; it requires effective strategies and frameworks, among which incentives are paramount. Creativity flourishes in organizations that support open ideas:<sup>8</sup> these organizations create environments that inspire personnel and maintain innovative workplaces; those that fail are large organizations that stifle creativity with rules and provide no slack for change. There is a role for management in the creative process: but it is not to manage it; it is to manage for it. Why? Because creativity does not happen exclusively and tacitly

in a person's head but in interaction with a social context wherein it may be codified. For any organization, operating in an external environment, an interactionist model of creativity and innovation needs to encompass organizational context, organizational knowledge, and inter- and intra-organizational relationships, not forgetting the (increasingly multicultural) creative makeup of the individuals (antecedent conditions, cognitive style, ability, intrinsic motivation, knowledge, personality) and teams (group composition, characteristics, and processes) who operate in it.<sup>9</sup> Table 1 reveals just how much focus can shift perception even at a simple, generic level.

**Table 1: Which Best Demonstrates Creativity? (1 = most popular choice)**

	Business / Employers	School Superintendents
Problem identification or articulation	1	9
Ability to identify new patterns of behavior or new combination of actions	2	3
Integration of knowledge across different disciplines	3	2
Ability to originate new ideas	4	6
Comfort with the notion of "no right answer"	5	11
Fundamental curiosity	6	10
Originality and inventiveness in work	7	4
Problem solving	8	1
Ability to take risks	9 (t)	8
Tolerance of ambiguity	9 (t)	7
Ability to communicate new ideas to others	11	5

Note: In 2006, a survey of United States employers rated creativity and innovation among the top five "skills" that they thought would grow in importance over the next 5 years. Yet, a recent survey of 155 public school superintendents and 89 employers revealed great divergence over what best demonstrates creativity. Respondents were asked to select three "skills." Employers ranked problem identification or articulation first, while school superintendents ranked it ninth. Superintendents ranked problem solving first, while employers ranked it eighth. This underscores the primacy of contextual factors, which of course also differ by sectoral specialization (and history).

Source: James Lichtenberg, Christopher Woock, and Mary Wright. 2008. See Ready to Innovate: Are Educators and Executives Aligned on the Creative Readiness of the U.S. Workforce? *The Conference Board. Research Report No. 1,424*. New York.

<sup>7</sup> This is not to say that private and public sector organizations have the same reasons to innovate. In the private sector, the imperative owes primarily to economic contexts and concerns, e.g., reducing costs and raising productivity, maintaining competitiveness, breathing life into slowing or stagnant markets (or, alternatively, facilitating entry into new markets), adapting to changing environments. In the public sector, motivation can be political (and, therefore, less amenable to rational planning and analysis). For instance, innovation has often been exploited to enhance reputation and image. But innovation is also becoming crucial to the design and delivery of public services in a dynamic society. In the 21st century, it is only through innovation, including at policy level, that public sector organizations will shift out of mass provision to efficient, personalized modes of service provision: society is becoming increasingly diverse, and individuals now demand more from public services, too—innovations are the product of the creative interaction of supply and demand, for example, in the areas of broad areas of shared services, procurement, efficiency, and joined-up services.

<sup>8</sup> Peter Drucker maintained that creativity is rarely a limiting factor. He argued that there are more ideas in any organization than can possibly be put to use. The issue was how to create value out of them.

<sup>9</sup> Put simply, drawing from Andrew Van de Ven, the model articulates four basic factors: new ideas, people, interactions, and institutional context. This means that managers seeking to harness creativity and innovation confront four basic problems: (i) a human problem related to managing attention, (ii) a process problem related to managing new ideas into good currency, (iii) a structural problem related to managing part-whole relationships, and (iv) a strategic problem related to institutional leadership.

## TYPES AND SOURCES OF INNOVATION

The main types of innovation are divided into product innovations, service innovations, and organizational (procedural or process) innovations.<sup>10</sup> The most common are market-led or market-push innovation; others are technology-led innovations (for which markets must be developed). All can be classified depending on the degree of their impact, viz., incremental, radical, or systemic. Peter Drucker<sup>11</sup> identified seven sources of innovation: (i) unexpected occurrences, (ii) incongruities of various kinds, (iii) process needs, (iv) changes in an industry or market, (v) demographic changes, (vi) changes in perceptions, and (vii) new knowledge. (These seven sources overlap, and the potential for innovation may lie in more than one area at a time.) He explained that purposeful, systematic innovation begins with the analysis of the sources of new opportunities. However, he emphasized that in seeking opportunities, innovative organizations need to look for simple, focused solutions to real problems. That takes diligence, persistence, ingenuity, and knowledge.

**“The key question isn’t ‘What fosters creativity?’ but it is why in God’s name isn’t everyone creative? Where was the human potential lost? How was it crippled? I think therefore a good question might be not why do people create? But why do people not create or innovate? We have got to abandon that sense of amazement in the face of creativity, as if it were a miracle if anybody created anything.”**

—Abraham Maslow

## LEVERAGING ENTERPRISE

Creativity in products, services, procedures, and processes is now more important than ever. It is needed equally in the established enterprise, the public sector organization, and

the new venture. Why is it then that many organizations unwittingly carry out managerial practices that destroy it? With exceptions, most managers do not stifle creativity on purpose.<sup>12</sup> Yet, in the pursuit of productivity, efficiency, and control, they often undermine it. The figure below shows that creative-thinking skills are one part of creativity but that expertise and motivation are also essential. Managers can influence the first two, but doing so is costly and takes time.<sup>13</sup> They can make a more effective difference by boosting the intrinsic motivation of personnel. To manage for creativity and innovation in ways that keep clients, audiences, and partners satisfied, they have five levers: (i) the amount of challenge they give to personnel to stimulate minds; (ii) the degree of freedom they grant around procedures and processes to minimize hassle; (iii) the way they design work groups to tap ideas from all ranks; (iv) the encouragement and incentives they give, which should include rewards and recognition; and (v) the nature of organizational support. Needless to say, managers must themselves be motivated.

## OPENING DOORS TO DIVERSE PERSPECTIVES

Before World War II, closed innovation was the operating paradigm for most companies.<sup>14</sup> Innovating enterprises kept their discoveries secret and made no attempt to assimilate information from outside their own research and development laboratories. Collaboration need not be bounded by the wall of the organization. In recent years, the world has seen major advances in technology and organization assisting the diffusion of information. Not least of these are electronic communication systems, including the internet. Today, data

**“If you want to make an apple pie from scratch, you must first create the universe.”**

—Carl Sagan

<sup>10</sup> More recently, ancillary innovations in the form of changes in the boundary relationships of an organization have also appeared. These lead an organization to work with new partners outside previously existing areas and require close cooperation and collaboration in strategic alliances. Knowledge-sharing partnerships may qualify as such. Some have expanded the three conventional categories further, citing organizational innovations.

<sup>11</sup> Peter Drucker. 1985. *Innovation and Entrepreneurship*. New York: HarperCollins.

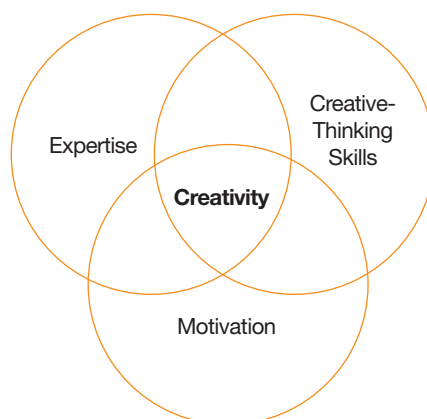
<sup>12</sup> Still, preventing innovation can secure control over a workforce, be it by centralizing authority in a particular department or person, limiting possibilities for action, or reducing the need for human capital. A further explanation for aversion to risk in the public sector might be that the costs of failure remain so high—both politically and professionally—that managers shy away from innovation as a feature of everyday practice. Another might be that there are few financial or career incentives to think outside the box. Monopolistic structures, “ad hocism,” tight budgets, and heavy workloads can also hinder the long-term investment and commitment that is needed to truly embed a culture of innovation. Paradoxically, the need to keep up sometimes also means that new technologies or ways of working are adopted before a prior innovation takes root.

<sup>13</sup> Hiring the right person is the single, biggest, most important decision an organization makes. Obviously, success or failure flow from understanding (or not) the need to recruit. Having a talent management strategy gives managers guidance about what they should do more or less of. It also helps ensure that everyone is familiar with the priorities of the organization and how recruitment can impact it. The steps are to (i) specify what kind of talent the organization needs, (ii) identify what and where the gaps are, (iii) identify high potentials, (iv) assess readiness for leadership transitions, (v) accelerate development, and (vi) focus and drive performance. (Personnel should play an active role in the management of their own talent, too.)

<sup>14</sup> In the past, innovation was considered a simple process of investment in fundamental research leading to commercialization of new products by farsighted management, usually in the “traditional” high-technology and manufacturing sectors. (However, knowledge-intensive services, such as finance, business services, and engineering, have formed important and successful elements of a trend of innovations in service and organizational, not product, innovations. Silicon Valley has been the world’s most prolific laboratory for information technology innovation for more than 40 years.)

**Figure: The Three Components of Creativity**

**Expertise** is, in a word, knowledge—technical, procedural, and intellectual.



**Creative-thinking skills** determine how flexibly and imaginatively people approach problems. Do their solutions upend the status quo? Do they persevere through dry spells?

Not all **motivation** is created equal. An inner passion to solve the problem at hand leads to solutions far more creative than do external rewards, such as money. This component—called intrinsic motivation—is the one that can be most immediately influenced by the work environment.

Source: Teresa Amabile. 1998. How to Kill Creativity. *Harvard Business Review*. September–October. pp. 76–87.

and information can be transferred so swiftly that it seems impossible to prevent movement (should one want to). Since organizations cannot stop this phenomenon, they must learn to take advantage of it.<sup>15</sup> Communities and networks of practice are fertile venues that provide intellectual challenge,

allow people to pursue their passions, foster mutual trust, organize a setting for “noble” work, and gather appreciative audiences. Table 2 underscores that open innovation requires mind-sets and organizational cultures different from those of traditional (closed) innovation.

**Table 2: Closed and Open Innovation**

Closed Innovation Principles	Open Innovation Principles
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The smart people in our field work for us.</li><li>• To profit from research and development, we must discover it, develop it, and ship it ourselves.</li><li>• If we discover it ourselves, we will get it to market first.</li><li>• The company that gets an innovation to market first will win.</li><li>• If we create the most and the best ideas in the industry, we will win.</li><li>• We should control our innovation process, so that our competitors do not profit from our ideas.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Not all the smart people work for us. We need to work with smart people inside and outside our company.</li><li>• External research and development can create significant value; internal research and development is needed to claim some portion of that value.</li><li>• We do not have to originate the research to profit from it.</li><li>• Building a better business model is better than getting to market first.</li><li>• If we make the best use of internal and external ideas, we will win.</li><li>• We should profit from others' use of our innovation process, and we should buy others' intellectual property whenever it advances our own business model.</li></ul>

Source: Wikipedia. 2009. *Open Innovation*. Available: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/open\\_innovation](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/open_innovation)

<sup>15</sup> Famously, Albert Einstein suggested that problems cannot be solved at the same level of awareness that created them. This means that novel answers often lie outside the current system. Therefore, individuals who search widely for innovations are crucial to a positive future. Organizations that mean to foster performance and change should identify and value scouts and give them the leeway and resources to search in distant places.

## COMPONENTS OF INNOVATION SYSTEMS

There is no simple universal formula for successful innovation: it is nonlinear, works at many levels, and is too complex to be pinned down in that way. It is uniquely human and cannot be done by machines. Nevertheless, innovations are not random: they occur in relation to the past, present, and future conditions of an organization. The characteristics of innovation systems are that they recruit and retain highly skilled and trained personnel, give them access to knowledge, and then encourage and enable them to think and act innovatively. Components of an effective innovation system include

- Clarity in *mission statements and goals*, which invariably feature a commitment from senior managers to assume responsibility for the risk of failure.
- An *organizational culture* that values innovation, where there is encouragement for personnel to think differently, take calculated risks, and challenge the status quo. Major forces such as leadership, attitudes to risk, budgeting, audit, performance measurement, recruitment, and open innovation are aligned in support.
- A *systems approach* to management that understands innovation as one part of a wider context, appreciates interconnections, and can conduct systematic analyses of how a problem interacts with other problems, parts of the organization, projects, etc. Management fosters coordination across these interconnections and stresses integration rather than compartmentalization.
- The adequate *resourcing* of innovation in line with strategy.
- The placing of *responsibility* for innovation on all staff.
- Understanding that *creativity* is desirable but insufficient. Innovation ambassadors must still take responsibility for follow through.
- An enriched *physical workplace* that enhances creativity by providing accessible, casual meeting spots; physical stimuli; space for quiet reflection; a variety of communication tools, e.g., whiteboards, bulletin boards; contact space for clients, audiences, and partners; and room for individual expression, among others.
- Human resource systems that ensure *staff* have diverse thinking (or learning) styles, giving them a variety of perspectives on single problems.
- Team setups that avoid *groupthink* and balance the beginner's mind with experience, freedom with discipline,

**“ To turn really interesting ideas and fledgling technologies into a company that can continue to innovate for years, it requires a lot of disciplines. ”**

— Steve Jobs

play with professionalism, and improvisation with planning. Teams embody divergent and convergent thinking, diverse thinking styles, and diversity of skills; and handle conflict.

- High levels of *decentralization* and *functional differentiation* and a range of *specialized areas* within the organization.
- Honed *knowledge management* systems and processes that constantly bring new ideas, concepts, data, information, and knowledge into the organization.
- Numerous and empowered members of relevant *communities and networks* of practice.
- Processes and methodologies that identify and share *good practice*.
- A *performance measurement* system that measures the innovative pulse of the organization; ensures monitoring and evaluation of inputs, activities, outputs, outcomes, and impacts; and feeds lessons back to the system.
- The instigation of *incentives* and *rewards* for innovative individuals and teams.
- Plentiful *space* for creative thinking and reflective practice, e.g., away-days, brainstorming sessions, peer assists, after-action reviews and retrospects, problem-solving groups, discussion groups, and forums.<sup>16</sup>
- Linkages with the *marketing* function, in ways that involve stakeholders and seek regular feedback.
- Effective *dissemination* systems.
- Dedication *information systems* that ensure positive coverage and publicize success.
- Structured *intellectual property management* systems that identify, protect, value, manage, and audit the organization's intellectual property.

Tables 3–5 help determine how friendly a workplace is to creativity and innovation; assess how reward structures, group norms and attitudes, and management styles support creativity; and plan how an idea will be rolled out. ■

<sup>16</sup> All Google engineers are encouraged to spend 20% of their work time, i.e., 1 day per week, to pursue independent projects that interest them. At 3M, it is 15%.

**Table 3: Assessing a Workplace's Friendliness to Creativity and Innovation**

Dimension	Rating		
	Adequate	A Strength	Needs Improvement
<b>Your Leadership Style</b>			
<hr/>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• I can describe my own preferred style of thinking and working.</li></ul>			
<hr/>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• I have talked with members of my group about their preferred modes of problem solving.</li></ul>			
<hr/>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• I encourage intellectual conflict within my group.</li></ul>			
<hr/>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• When group members disagree, I help them determine the source of their differences.</li></ul>			
<hr/>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• When communicating with others, I take into consideration their preferred thinking style.</li></ul>			
<hr/>			
<b>Diversity of Styles</b>			
<hr/>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• I am aware of the creative value of diverse thinking styles, and try to incorporate this diversity in teams.</li></ul>			
<hr/>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• I actively seek out or hire people with diverse backgrounds and thinking styles.</li></ul>			
<hr/>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Our group recognizes the conflict that creative abrasion can cause, but also appreciates its value.</li></ul>			
<hr/>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• We have taken formal diagnostic tests to identify thinking or learning styles, and discussed the results of these assessments.</li></ul>			
<hr/>			
<b>Your Work Group</b>			
<hr/>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The majority never ignores the minority opinions in my work group.</li></ul>			
<hr/>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• I have added someone to my work group specifically because he or she brings a fresh perspective.</li></ul>			
<hr/>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Our work environment supports those who think differently from the majority.</li></ul>			
<hr/>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The thinking styles, skills, and experiences of my work group's members are diverse and balanced.</li></ul>			
<hr/>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• I actively look for group members whose thinking styles differ from my own.</li></ul>			
<hr/>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• I help my group establish and agree upon a clear project goal at the start of each project.</li></ul>			
<hr/>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• My group has formally agreed-upon behavior guidelines for how they should work together and treat each other.</li></ul>			
<hr/>			
<b>The Psychological Environment</b>			
<hr/>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• I support people taking intelligent risks, and do not penalize them when they fail.</li></ul>			
<hr/>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• There are opportunities for people to take on assignments that involve risk and stretch their potential.</li></ul>			
<hr/>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• We openly discuss risk taking, assess the risk potential of projects, and make contingency plans or identify risk management strategies.</li></ul>			
<hr/>			

*continued on next page*

Table 3 continued

Dimension	Rating		
	Adequate	A Strength	Needs Improvement
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Rewards and/or recognition are given for creative ideas.</li> <li>As long as they show learning from the experience, group members are not penalized for experimentation and risk taking.</li> </ul>			
<b>The Physical Workspace</b>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Our workspace includes stimulating objects, such as journals, art, and other items that are not directly related to our business.</li> <li>I have made changes to our physical workspace to improve communication and creative interaction.</li> <li>I provide group members with a wide variety of traditional and nontraditional communication tools (e-mail, whiteboards, crayons and paper, etc.).</li> <li>Group members are encouraged to make their workspaces reflect their individuality.</li> <li>Our workspace includes both areas for boisterous interaction and areas for quiet reflection.</li> </ul>			
<b>Bringing in Outsiders or Alternative Perspectives</b>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Our group makes visits to people outside the division or organization in order to find different perspectives and ideas.</li> <li>Our group has observed clients actually using our products or services in their own environment.</li> <li>Our group has observed our clients' customers using our products or services in their own environment.</li> <li>I have arranged for speakers from other industries to come to talk to or work with my group.</li> <li>Our group has observed people using competitors' products or services.</li> <li>Our group has benchmarked the functions and characteristics of our products, services, or processes against an industry other than our own.</li> </ul>			
<b>Promoting Group Convergence</b>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I encourage group members to bring up and discuss nonwork-related subjects when they interfere with work.</li> <li>When a project has been completed, I hold a debrief meeting to determine specifically what to do differently (or the same) the next time.</li> <li>When I hold a debrief meeting, I always make sure that all members can be present.</li> <li>When my group is stuck on a problem, I make sure they get "down time" or time off to step back, relax, and allow their subconscious minds to work.</li> <li>At the end of a project, I provide a way for my group to celebrate and rejuvenate.</li> <li>Project schedules allow enough time for group brainstorming and discussion of ideas.</li> </ul>			

Source: Harvard ManageMentor. 2000. *Managing for Creativity and Innovation*. Boston: Harvard Business School Press.

**Table 4: Assessing the Psychological Environment for Creativity**

Question	Rating		
	Adequate	A Strength	Needs Improvement
• Are group guidelines already in place? Are they articulated and disseminated?			
• Do you, as the manager, encourage risk taking?			
• Are people allowed to take intelligent risks, and fail, without being penalized?			
• When someone fails, do you help him/her and the group find the learning in the failure?			
• Do you distinguish between intelligent failures (something risky, but promising) and mistakes (something clearly avoidable)?			
• Do your current rewards motivate group members to be creative?			
• Do you currently have rewards for creative ideas and suggestions?			
• Do you have both extrinsic (for example, money) and intrinsic (for example, providing a sense of accomplishment) rewards in your current reward system?			
• Do you recognize group members who successfully work outside their preferred thinking style or area of expertise?			
• Do you support intellectual conflict within your group?			
• Do you encourage people to point out unacknowledged and taboo subjects that are holding the group back?			
• Do you reward collaboration?			
• Do individuals have freedom to choose their projects or to determine how they reach their agreed-upon goals?			
• Are you, as a manager, alert to individuals who may be burning out?			
• Do you celebrate small successes?			
• Do you encourage the group to stop and review how much progress it has made?			
<b>Ideas for Improvement</b>			
Based on your answers, what refinements would you make to your group's norms? To your reward structure? To your own management style?			

Source: Harvard ManageMentor. 2000. *Managing for Creativity and Innovation*. Boston: Harvard Business School Press.



**Table 5: Planning for Innovation**

Idea	Generated by	Date
<b>Innovation</b> (What form will the idea take?)		
<b>Sources of Support?</b> (What sources of assistance or support will be needed to carry out the innovation?)		
<b>Who?</b>	<b>Why?</b>	
<b>What?</b> (e.g., finances, personnel, etc.)		
<b>Ways to Gain and Strengthen Support?</b>		
<b>Sources of Resistance?</b> (What are the sources of resistance, e.g., people, policies, procedures, that might impede the process of innovation?)		
<b>Who?</b>	<b>What?</b>	<b>Why?</b>
<b>What are the Ways to Overcome or Minimize Resistance?</b>		
<b>Impact, Outcome, Outputs, and Activities Planned</b>		
<b>Impact/Outcome/Outputs/Activities</b>	<b>Assumptions and Risks</b>	<b>Completion Date</b>
<b>Performance Targets and Indicators</b>		
1.	6.	
2.	7.	
3.	8.	
4.	9.	
5.	10.	

Source: Adapted from Harvard ManageMentor. 2000. *Managing for Creativity and Innovation*. Boston: Harvard Business School Press.



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# Identifying and Sharing Good Practices

Good practice is a process or methodology that has been shown to be effective in one part of the organization and might be effective in another too.



## RATIONALE

Most organizations know that learning from the past increases the chances of success in the future—finding ways to do so can also link staff with the resources they need to complete tasks faster, better, and more cheaply. Frequently, this is done by means of instruction manuals or “how-to” guides—which typically provide information or advice on a particular topic, or with taxonomies—which are a common way to organize content logically. Leading organizations maximize opportunities across all core knowledge activities to identify, create, store, share, and use better.

A good practice is defined as anything that has been tried and shown to work in some way—whether fully or in part but with at least some evidence of effectiveness—and that may have implications for practice at any level elsewhere. Three possible levels of good practice flow from this: promising practices, demonstrated practices, and replicated practices.<sup>1</sup> Since knowledge is both explicit and tacit, good practice programs should comprise two elements: good practices databases that connect people with information, and collaboration or knowledge sharing and learning mechanisms, such as communities of practice or peer assists that connect people with people.

## BENEFITS

The benefits from identifying and sharing good practice are that doing so will

- Identify and replace poor practices.
- Raise the performance of poor performers closer to that of the best.
- Decrease the learning curve of new employees.
- Reduce rework and prevent “reinvention of the wheel.”
- Cut costs through better productivity and efficiency.

- Improve services.
- Minimize organizational knowledge loss (both tacit and explicit).

Needless to say, good practice programs give the highest returns where business processes are already quite developed and where knowledge and experience has already accumulated. They will also be useful where several units perform similar tasks but are dispersed and cannot easily learn from one another through day-to-day contact.

## PROCESS

David Skyrme Associates suggest a six-step approach to identifying and sharing good practice:

- **Identify Users’ Requirements.** Although this step seems obvious it is not uncommon to start by designing a database. This is a case of putting the cart before the horse. One should start by considering where one can really add value, looking at what areas of the organization need attention. Who will benefit most from better knowledge and understanding of good practices? How will they access and use these?
- **Discover Good Practices.** There are several ways to identify good practices. One is to examine individuals and groups that deliver excellent results and are therefore likely to be using good practices. Having discovered these, one will then need to discern what parts of their overall approach or methodology represent good practice. This is likely to be done best by people knowledge of the relevant practice. But other approaches exist too: they include communities of practice, after-action reviews and retrospects, and exit interviews. Also, much can be learned from the practices of other organizations in the same field, or even from organizations in others.

<sup>1</sup> Some prefer to use the term “best practice” but it is debatable whether there is a single “best” approach and approaches are constantly evolving and being updated.



- **Document Good Practices.** Good practice descriptions are commonly kept in a database in standard format. A typical template might include the following:
  - **Title:** A short descriptive title that can be accompanied by a short abstract.
  - **Profile:** Several short sections outlining processes, function, author, keywords, etc.
  - **Context:** Where is this applicable? What problems does it solve?
  - **Resources:** What resources and skills are needed to carry out the good practice?
  - **Description:** What are the processes and steps involved? Are performance measures associated with the good practice?
  - **Lessons Learned:** What proves difficult? What would the originators of the practice do differently if they were to do it again?
  - **Links to Resources:** Expert contact details, workbooks, video clips, articles, transcripts of review meetings, etc.
  - **Tools and Techniques:** A description of the approach and methodology used in developing the good practice.
- **Validate Good Practices.** A practice is only good if there is a demonstrable link between what is practiced and the end result. Still, in most cases, judgment is needed as to what constitutes good practice. A frequent approach is to have a panel of peer reviewers evaluate a potential good practice. It is better to seek input and feedback from clients too.
- **Disseminate and Apply.** Databases of good practices are a useful starting point but most organizations find it necessary to complement these with face-to-face knowledge sharing. This is where true value is added for the process can also generate two-way benefits. Mechanisms include communities of practice, quality circles, visits to individuals and groups displaying high performance, organized learning events, secondments, and exchanges.
- **Develop a Supporting Infrastructure.** To successfully implement a good practice program, you need to ensure you have

the required infrastructure in place. This infrastructure is often developed as part of a wider knowledge management strategy. Typically, several generic aspects need attention. The people to facilitate and drive the process through its initial stages, until it becomes embedded in the organization's ways of working, e.g., a good practice team or a network of good practice coordinators. The technical infrastructure for document sharing and databases. The content management infrastructure to ensure that good practices are documented and classified electronically in a way that makes them easy to find.

### CAUTION

Here are a few Do's and Don'ts to identifying and sharing good practice:

- Good practices are not a quick-fix solution and setting up the required processes and infrastructure can be resource intensive.
- Good practice evolves constantly.
- Do not underestimate the importance of organizational culture.
- Resist the temptation to focus on explicit knowledge: it is through people that deep knowledge is transferred.
- Do not be too prescriptive about good practices and focus instead on encouraging people to identify and share them voluntarily.
- Tie good practices to business drivers, focus on those that add value, demonstrate benefits, and give evidence.
- Recognize the individuals and groups who submit good practices.
- Promote the good practice resource actively.
- Monitor usage of the good practice resource.
- Make contact to the provider of the good practice easy. ■

### FURTHER READING

David Skyrme Associates. 2008. *Best Practices in Best Practices*. Available: [www.skyrme.com/kshop/kguides.htm](http://www.skyrme.com/kshop/kguides.htm)





# Learning and Development for Management

The insights, attitudes, and skills that equip managers for their various responsibilities come from many sources outside formal education or training. To identify areas for improvement, it is first necessary to identify what these responsibilities are.



## BACKGROUND

To improve the performance of development agencies, international assistance has traditionally employed three approaches. They are

- **Improving technologies.** This approach has centered on deploying electronic platforms and databases to managers, thereby enabling them to use resources more efficiently and to make their performance more effective. Transfers of technology have centered on tools for budgeting, accounting, and expenditure control; the speed and accuracy of information flows, particularly through computers; and more rational methods of scheduling, monitoring, and implementing projects and programs.
- **Rationalizing organization and procedures and adjusting structures and methods.** This approach has sought to enhance management control, save resources, increase efficiency, and speed the delivery of services. Basically, it has entailed applying to government operations the prescriptions and experiences of the scientific management movement.
- **Strengthening bureaucracies as social institutions.** This approach has focused on building institutions in ways that enhance their internal capabilities and improve their ability to interact productively with their external environment and thus sustain the activities for which they are responsible.

All three approaches are fairly technocratic, however, and have not always been fully adapted to the uncertainties, complexities, and societal pluralism that characterize the environments in which development agencies operate. Hence, new methods have been developed to complement them. They have to do with

- **Reforming structures.** Structural approaches have been concerned with administrative deconcentration, institutional devolution, the organization of work to relax the rigidities of conventional bureaucratic structures, and the use of paraprofessionals from local communities and associations to implement projects and programs.

- **Reinventing operational procedures.** The reform of operational procedures has been concerned with information management to maintain the integrity of information in bureaucratic structures, and social marketing to determine what society wants, and what methods of supplying services it would prefer.
- **Motivating.** Motivational approaches relate to rewards and punishments, working conditions, participatory management, and compensation.
- **Strengthening accountability.** More recently, we have also seen greater attention to responsiveness and accountability, and a desire on the part of the public sector to resist political pressures at the level of project and program implementation.
- **Eradicating corruption.** We are also witnessing renewed efforts to minimize corruption, negligence, and arbitrary behavior in the public sector.

## THE IMPORTANCE OF LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT FOR MANAGEMENT

International assistance to improve the organizational performance of development agencies may have underestimated the value of enhancing managerial skills by learning and development, and by establishing and strengthening training institutions and programs. Management capacities can improve. This is necessary because the insights, attitudes, and skills that equip managers for their various responsibilities come from many sources outside formal education or training. To identify the areas for improvement, however, it is first necessary to identify what these responsibilities are. Five functions or roles can be identified for managers and, for each, targeted management learning and development is required.

- (i) **Instrumental functions.** For the instrumental functions of managers, learning and development might enhance
  - Generic management techniques (e.g., financial, personnel and human relations, informational, supervisory, structural, and procedural).



- Project and program management skills (e.g., the processes of design, implementation, and evaluation of individual service, regulatory, enterprise, and promotional activities sponsored by governments).
- (ii) **Political functions.** For the political functions of managers, learning and development might reinforce
  - Skills in policy analysis, both generic, and as they apply to the substantive sectors in which managers are expected to achieve specialized competence.
  - Sensitivity to methods for coping with inter-bureaucratic influences, societal forces, and political interventions that impinge on projects and programs.
  - Appreciation of the differential benefits and costs of policy and program outputs on the publics they affect.
- (iii) **Entrepreneurial functions.** For the entrepreneurial functions of managers, learning and development might improve
  - Appreciation of the opportunities and limitations of proactive management styles outside normal operating routines. These include management interventions that attempt to modify policies, invigorate operations, recombine resources in fresh patterns, and enhance both staff and public participation in projects and programs.
- (iv) **Interorganizational functions.** For the inter-organizational functions of managers, learning and development might develop
  - Analytical insights, such as linkage management.
  - Operating skills, such as environmental mapping, required for policy and program implementation that

involve two or more government agencies and multi-institutional service networks.

- (v) **Public interest functions.** For the public interest functions of managers, learning and development might strengthen
  - Skills in identifying and articulating long-term societal goals and in shaping policies and projects and programs that implement these goals.
  - Criteria and methods of dealing with the ethical dilemmas that inevitably confront managers.

### ... AND PERFORMANCE EVALUATION

Although the specific functions and roles of managers vary, the criteria by which their performance should be evaluated can be grouped under five headings. The common management goals of effectiveness (e.g., achieving intended outputs) and of efficiency (e.g., the economical employment of resources), of course, remain necessary. They are not, however, sufficient guides for managers. Accordingly, management performance must also be oriented toward, and assessed by, three other interconnected values. These are responsiveness (e.g., success in meeting actual demand and the needs of society while heeding its preferences and convenience); outreach (e.g., success in promoting participation and resource contributions from society); and sustainability (e.g., success in insuring the continuity of services by innovating and adapting to new circumstances, maintaining support from society, and garnering the required resources). These are the demanding but nevertheless attainable criteria by which managers should expect to be evaluated. ■





# Learning from Evaluation

Evaluation serves two main purposes: accountability and learning. Development agencies have tended to prioritize the first, and given responsibility for that to centralized units. But evaluation for learning is the area where observers find the greatest need today and tomorrow.



## REDIRECTING DIVISION-OF-LABOR APPROACHES

Because the range of types (not to mention levels) of learning is broad, organizations have, from the early days, followed a division-of-labor approach to ascribing responsibility for learning. Typically, responsibility is vested in a policy (or research) unit to allow managers to focus on decision making while other organizational constituents generate information and execute plans. Without doubt, this has encouraged compartmentalization of whatever learning is generated. What is more, since organizational constituents operate in different cultures to meet different priorities, each questions the value added by the arrangement. Table 1 redirects traditional approaches to evaluation by recognizing, with reference to nongovernment organizations, that different groups of stakeholders have different learning needs, not all of which can be met by centralized evaluation agencies. Table 2 develops this argument further by making clear that even decentralized learning is itself prone to several types of failure.

## INCREASING VALUE ADDED FROM INDEPENDENT OPERATIONS EVALUATION

In many development agencies, independent evaluation contributes to decision making throughout the project cycle and in the agencies as a whole, covering all aspects of sovereign and sovereign-guaranteed operations (public sector operations); nonsovereign operations; and the policies, strategies, practices,

**“ Give me a fruitful error any time, full of seeds, bursting with its own corrections. You can keep your sterile truth for yourself. ”**

— Vilfredo Pareto

and procedures that govern them. The changing scope of evaluations and fast-rising expectations in relation to their use are welcome. However, the broad spectrum of independent evaluation demands that evaluation units strengthen and monitor the results focus of their operations. This means that the relevance and usefulness of evaluation findings to core audiences should be enhanced. Recurrent requests are that evaluation units should improve the timeliness of their evaluations, strengthen the operational bearing of the findings, and increase access to and exchange of the lessons. Minimum steps to increase value added from independent evaluation involve (i) adhering to strategic principles, (ii) sharpening evaluation strategies, (iii) distinguishing recommendation typologies, (iv) making recommendations better, (v) reporting evaluation findings, and (vi) tracking action on recommendations.<sup>1</sup> Here, performance management tools, such as the balanced scorecard system, might enable them to measure nonfinancial and financial results, covering soft but essential areas as client satisfaction, quality and product cycle times, effectiveness of new product development, and the building of organizational and staff skills.

<sup>1</sup> ADB. 2007. *Acting on Recommendations and Learning from Lessons in 2007*. Manila: ADB. Available: [www.adb.org/documents/pers/rpe-oth-2007-15.asp](http://www.adb.org/documents/pers/rpe-oth-2007-15.asp)



**Table 1: Learning in Nongovernment Organizations**

Who Should Be Learning?	What Should They Be Learning?
Field Staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Participation in practice</li><li>• Effective empowerment</li><li>• Local-level collaboration with government and other nongovernment organizations</li><li>• Gender dimensions of local development</li></ul>
Technical Specialists	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Good practice in their area of expertise</li><li>• Ways of integrating with other disciplines</li><li>• How to improve cost-effectiveness</li><li>• How existing internal and external policies affect performance</li></ul>
Operational Managers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• What factors make interventions and projects work well or badly, for example, funding conditions</li><li>• How to be more cost-effective</li><li>• How to coordinate internally and externally</li></ul>
Fund Raisers and Development Educationalists	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Principles and insights to be used in negotiation with professional donors</li><li>• New messages to get across to private contributors</li><li>• Examples of impact and what made things work or fail</li></ul>
Leaders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• How policy choices and strategies work out in practice</li><li>• How to make external relationships more effective</li><li>• How best to exert influence</li><li>• What environmental factors have had unforeseen effects and must be taken into account</li></ul>
Governors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The quality and costs of donors</li><li>• The degree of stakeholder satisfaction</li><li>• Consistency between mission, strategy, and impact</li><li>• Improving social standing and credibility of the organization</li></ul>

Source: Adapted from Fowler, A. 1997. *Striking a Balance: A Guide to Enhancing the Effectiveness of Non-Governmental Organizations in International Development*. London: Earthscan.

**Table 2: Types of Learning Failure**

Stage	Category
Preparation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Failures of intelligence: not knowing enough at the early stages of project formulation, resulting in crucial aspects of the project context being ignored.</li><li>• Failures of decision making: drawing false conclusions or making wrong choices from the data that are available, and underestimating the importance of key pieces of information.</li></ul>
Implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Failures of implementation: bad or inadequate management of one or more important aspects of the project.</li><li>• Failures of reaction: inability or unwillingness to modify the project in response to new information or changes in conditions that come to light as the project proceeds.</li></ul>
Evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Failures of evaluation: not paying enough attention to the results.</li><li>• Failures of learning: not transferring the lessons into future plans and procedures.</li></ul>

Source: Adapted from Nolan, R. 2002. *Development Anthropology: Encounters in the Real World*. Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press.

Even so, the problématique of independent evaluation is still more complex.<sup>2</sup> At the request of shareholders tasked with reporting to political leadership, taxpayers, and citizens, feedback from evaluation studies has often tended to support accountability (and hence provide for control), not serve as an important foundation block of a learning organization. Some now argue for a reinterpretation of the notion of

accountability. Others cite lack of utility; the perverse, unintended consequences of evaluation for accountability, such as diversion of resources; emphasis on justification rather than improvement; distortion of program activities; incentive to lie, cheat, and distort; and misplaced accent on control.<sup>3</sup> Table 3 suggests that the two basic objectives of evaluations—accountability and learning—are generally incompatible.

**Table 3: Characteristics of Accountability and Lesson-Learning as Objectives of Evaluation Activity**

Item	Accountability as the Objective	Lesson-Learning as the Objective
<b>Basic Aim</b>	The basic aim is to find out about the past.	The basic aim is to improve future performance.
<b>Emphasis</b>	Emphasis is on the degree of success or failure.	Emphasis is on the reasons for success or failure.
<b>Favored by</b>	Parliaments, treasuries, media, pressure groups	Development agencies, developing countries, research institutions, consultants
<b>Selection of Topics</b>	Topics are selected based on random samples.	Topics are selected for their potential lessons.
<b>Status of Evaluation</b>	Evaluation is an end product.	Evaluation is part of the project cycle.
<b>Status of Evaluators</b>	Evaluators should be impartial and independent.	Evaluators usually include staff members of the aid agency.
<b>Importance of Data from Evaluations</b>	Data are only one consideration.	Data are highly valued for the planning and appraising of new development activities.
<b>Importance of Feedback</b>	Feedback is relatively unimportant.	Feedback is vitally important.

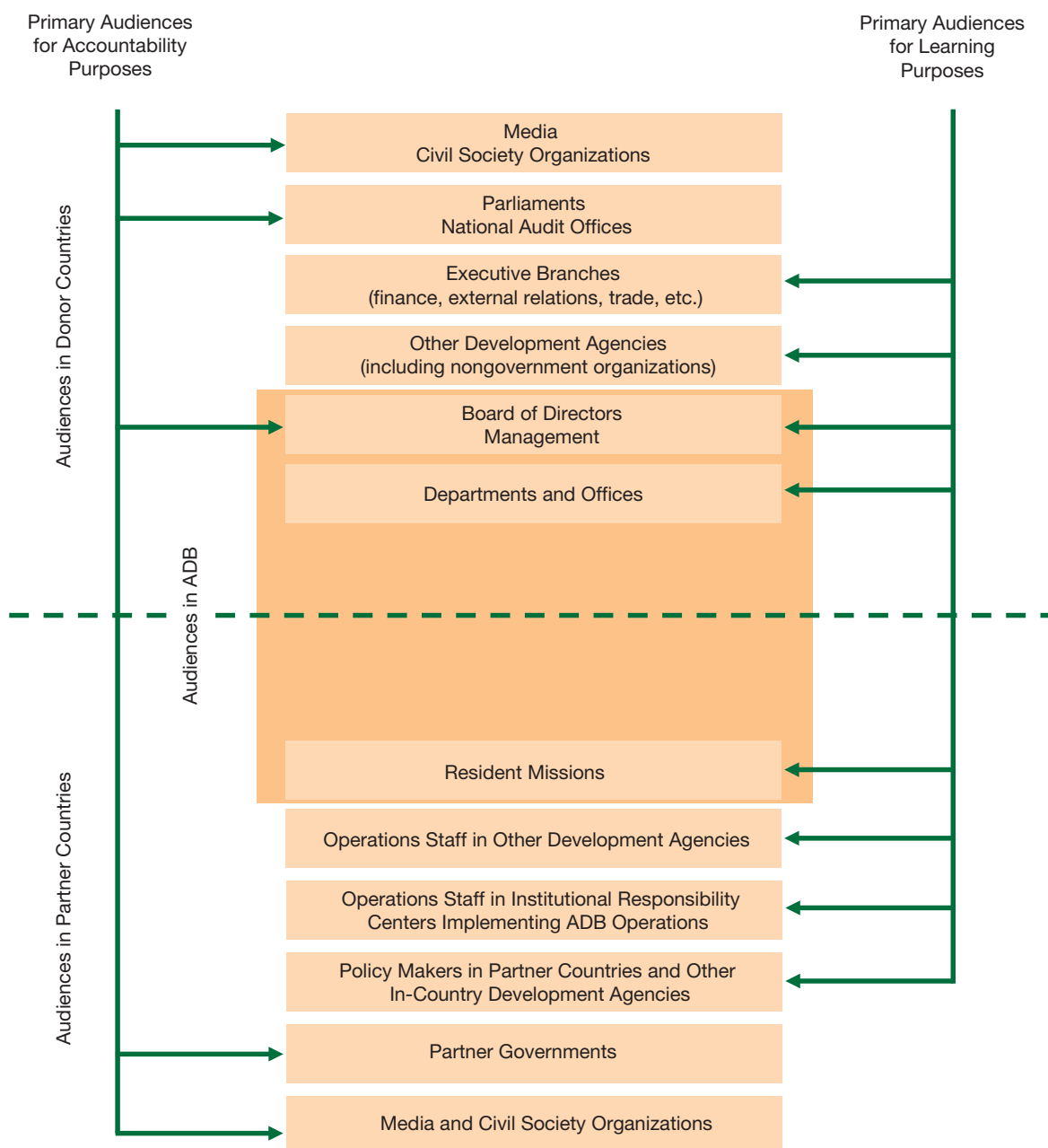
Source: Adapted from Cracknell, B. 2000. *Evaluating Development Aid: Issues, Problems, and Solutions*. East Sussex: Sage Publications.

The tension between the two functions of evaluation demands also that evaluation agencies distinguish primary audiences more clearly. Figure 1 illustrates how, barring some overlap, audiences for accountability and learning differ. Obviously, this has implications for the knowledge products and services that evaluation units should deploy to reach different target groups, including the dissemination tactics associated with each, and

underlines the message that one approach cannot be expected to suit all audiences. Table 4 lists the key ingredients of the distinct reports that would have to be tailored for each. Naturally, several knowledge management tools mentioned earlier would be leveraged to quicken the learning cycle of practice, experience, synthesis and innovation, dissemination, and uptake with one-time, near-term, and continuous efforts.

<sup>2</sup> Serrat, O. 2008. Increasing Value Added from Operations Evaluation. Manila: ADB. Unpublished.

<sup>3</sup> Lonsdale, J., B. Perrin, and M. Bemelmans-Videc, eds. 2007. *Making Accountability Work: Dilemmas for Evaluation and for Audit*. New Brunswick, New Jersey: Transaction Publishers.

**Figure 1: Target Audiences for Evaluation Feedback**

ADB = Asian Development Bank.

Source: Adapted from Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. 2001. *Evaluation and Aid Effectiveness No. 5. Evaluation Feedback for Effective Learning and Accountability*. Paris. Available: [www.oecd.org/dataoecd/10/29/2667326.pdf](http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/10/29/2667326.pdf)

**Table 4: Key Ingredients of Effective Reports**

<b>Evidence</b>	Persuasive Argument	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clear purpose</li> <li>• Cohesive argument</li> <li>• Quality of evidence</li> <li>• Transparency of evidence underpinning policy recommendations (e.g., a single study or a synthesis of available evidence)</li> </ul>
	Authority	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clear purpose</li> <li>• Cohesive argument</li> <li>• Quality of evidence</li> <li>• Transparency of evidence underpinning recommendations (e.g., a single study or a synthesis of available evidence)</li> </ul>
<b>Context</b>	Audience Context Specificity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Addresses the specific context (e.g., national, local)</li> <li>• Addresses the needs of target audience (e.g., social, economic policy)</li> </ul>
	Actionable Recommendations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Information linked to specific processes</li> <li>• Clear and feasible recommendations on steps to be taken</li> </ul>
<b>Engagement</b>	Presentation of Evidence-Informed Opinions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Presentation of author's own views about the implications of findings</li> <li>• Clear identification of argument components that are opinion based</li> </ul>
	Clear Language and Writing Style	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Easily understood by educated nonspecialists</li> </ul>
	Appearance and Design	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Visually engaging</li> <li>• Presentation of information through charts, graphs, and photographs</li> </ul>

Source: Adapted from Jones, N., and C. Walsh. 2008. Policy Briefs as a Communication Tool for Development Research. *ODI Background Note*. May. Available: [www.odi.org.uk/publications/background-notes/0805-policy-briefs-as-a-communication-tool.pdf](http://www.odi.org.uk/publications/background-notes/0805-policy-briefs-as-a-communication-tool.pdf)

**Table 5: Programming Work for Organizational Learning**

Organizational Level	Strategic Driver <sup>a</sup>	Reporting Mechanism	Content/Focus	Responsibility	Primary User and Uses	Timing
Corporate						
Policy						
Strategy						
Operations						

<sup>a</sup> The strategic drivers might be (i) developing evaluation capacity, (ii) informing corporate risk assessments by offices and departments, (iii) conducting evaluations in anticipation of known upcoming reviews, (iv) monitoring and evaluating performance, (v) critiquing conventional wisdom about development practice, and (vi) responding to requests from offices and departments.

Source: ADB. 2007. *Acting on Recommendations and Learning from Lessons in 2007*. Manila: ADB. Available: [www.adb.org/documents/pers/rpe-oth-2007-15.asp](http://www.adb.org/documents/pers/rpe-oth-2007-15.asp)

This is not to say that evaluation units face an either-or situation. Both accountability and learning are important goals for evaluation feedback. One challenge is to make accountability accountable. In essence, evaluation units are placing increased emphasis on results orientation while maintaining traditional checks on use of inputs and compliance with procedures. Lack of clarity on why evaluations for accountability are carried out, and what purpose they are expected to serve, contributes to their frequent lack of utility. Moreover, if evaluations for accountability add only limited value, resources devoted to documenting accountability can have a negative effect, perversely enough. However, evaluation for learning is the area where observers find the greatest need today and tomorrow, and evaluation units should be retooled

to meet it. Table 5 suggests how work programs for evaluation might be reinterpreted to emphasize organizational learning.

Evaluation capacity development promises much to the learning organization, and should be an activity in which centralized evaluation units have a comparative advantage. Capacity is the ability of people, organizations, and society as a whole to manage their affairs successfully; and capacity to undertake effective monitoring and evaluation is a determining factor of aid effectiveness. Evaluation capacity development is the process of reinforcing or establishing the skills, resources, structures, and commitment to conduct and use monitoring and evaluation over time. Many key decisions must be made when starting to develop evaluation capacity internally in a strategic way.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>4</sup> A discussion of the benefits of external evaluation capacity development is in Serrat, O. 2008. *Increasing Value Added from Operations Evaluation*. Manila: ADB. Unpublished.



Among the most important are

- **Architecture.** Locating and structuring evaluation functions and their coordination.
- **Strengthening evaluation demand.** Ensuring that there is an effective and well-managed demand for evaluations.
- **Strengthening evaluation supply.** Making certain that the skills and competencies are in place with appropriate organizational support.
- **Institutionalizing evaluations.** Building evaluation into policy-making systems.

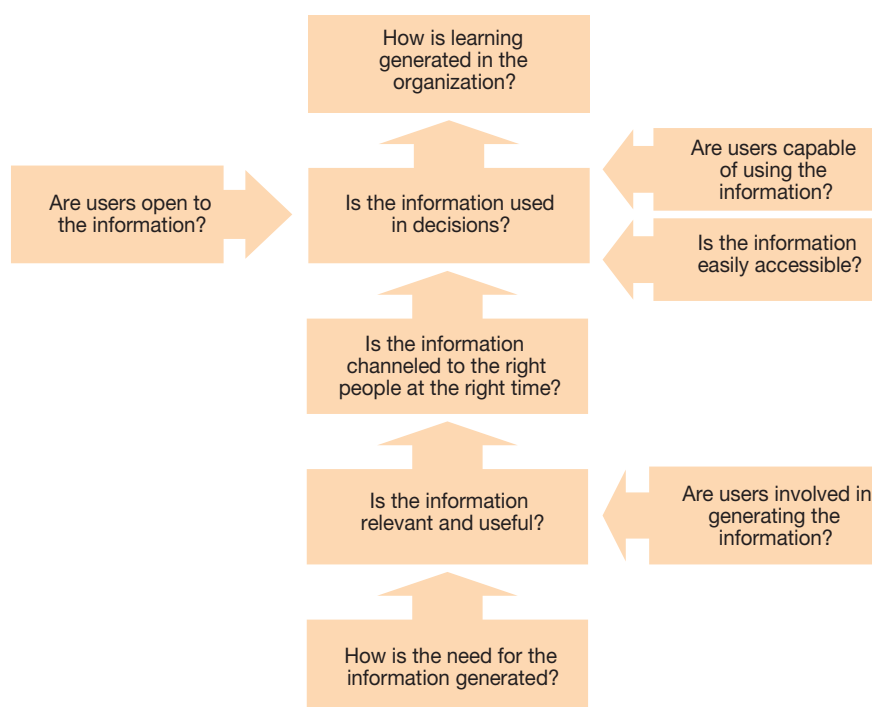
Why development agencies should want to develop in-house, self-evaluation capacity is patently clear. Stronger evaluation capacity will help them

- Develop as a learning organization.
- Take ownership of their visions for poverty reduction, if the evaluation vision is aligned with that.
- Profit more effectively from formal evaluations.
- Make self-evaluations an important part of their activities.

- Focus quality improvement efforts.
- Increase the benefits and decrease the costs associated with their operations.
- Augment their ability to change programming midstream and adapt in a dynamic, unpredictable environment.
- Build evaluation equity, if they are then better able to conduct more of their own self-evaluation, instead of hiring them out.
- Shorten the learning cycle.

Figure 2 poses key questions concerning how an organization may learn from evaluation, combining the two elements of learning by involvement and learning by communication. It provides the context within which to visualize continuing efforts to increase value added from independent evaluation, and underscores the role in internal evaluation capacity development. It also makes a strong case for more research into how development agencies learn how to learn. ■

**Figure 2: Internal Learning from Evaluations**



Source: Adapted from Scanteam International. 1993. Internal Learning from Evaluations and Reviews. Report No. 193. Oslo: Royal Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

## FURTHER READING

ADB. 2007. *Acting on Recommendations and Learning from Lessons in 2007*. Manila. Available: [www.adb.org/documents/pers/rpe-oth-2007-15.asp](http://www.adb.org/documents/pers/rpe-oth-2007-15.asp)

———. 2009. *Learning for Change in ADB*. Manila. Available: [www.adb.org/documents/books/learning-for-change/default.asp](http://www.adb.org/documents/books/learning-for-change/default.asp)





# Posting Research Online

Dissemination is an indispensable means of maximizing the impact of research. It is an intrinsic element of all good research practice that promotes the profile of research institutions and strengthens their capacities. The challenge is to ensure the physical availability of research material and to make it intelligible to those who access it.



Knowledge and information often stay where they are generated. For that reason, the performance of research institutions hangs on the ability to disseminate research findings to different audiences.<sup>1</sup> For each research agenda, this calls for a dissemination policy, a dissemination plan, a dissemination strategy, and dissemination tactics.

Over the past 10 years, the world has witnessed the amazingly rapid development of the internet as a worldwide communications network linking millions of computers. Not surprisingly, the internet is now the primary means of disseminating research findings, such as through digital libraries containing electronic journals, electronic print archives, and conference proceedings. It is now possible for all researchers to use the internet to promote research online so that it may be invoked by peers, educators, students, journalists, customers for research expertise, and the general public. Research institutions ignore the internet at their peril.

## POSTING RESEARCH ONLINE

There are powerful arguments for using the internet to disseminate research findings:

- **Outlay:** Posting is almost free of charge. The main cost is associated with compiling, designing, and producing material. Once material is online, hundreds, thousands, or even hundreds of thousands of people can access it at no additional cost to the supplier.
- **Speed and Flexibility:** The internet is very fast compared to most print media. It also enables hypertext-specific and interactive actions, such as linking to full journals or conference papers from publication lists or summaries (if copyright permits it). Posting takes minutes, unlike printing,

and helps material to be opportune and fresh. (Furthermore, updating material does not require a new print run.)

- **Synergies:** Posting enhances and sponsors other dissemination methods by allowing people to see the quality of work. Making material available online means that audiences are more likely to buy, subscribe to, or request other products.
- **Audiences:** The internet exposes work to new audiences. Although not everyone has access to it, more people will be able to find and access materials if they are available online as well as in print.
- **Monitoring and Evaluation:** Internet publication facilitates online impact assessment.<sup>2</sup>
- **Fund-raising:** The investors that fund research know that the internet links research to practice. Increasingly, internet publication is a requirement of research funding. Dissemination raises the profile of an organization and builds its capacity. Investors are more likely to be attracted to research institutions that are demonstrably committed to disseminating research findings to many end users.
- **Others:** The internet limits the need for gatekeepers, offers greater control over intellectual property, and eliminates the constraints posed by lack of space.

## COMMUNICATING ONLINE

Successful online communication means actively encouraging end users to read and absorb material. Simple operating principles can be drawn from an understanding of how people use the web:

- **Reading Online:** How do people behave online? End users are impatient. They are typically short of time and may

<sup>1</sup> Dissemination is the process of sharing knowledge and information. The challenge is to improve accessibility to audiences. This means making research findings physically accessible in comprehensible ways to as many audiences as possible.

<sup>2</sup> Conversely, it also draws broad-based feedback on the quality of work, which is an intrinsic element of all good research practice.



be paying for the connection. They want immediate gratification. They want to see the value of a page instantly. They are also active, not passive. They have the power to move from page to page and they want to exercise it. Research shows too that reading from a computer screen is tiring and takes about 25% longer than reading from paper. Therefore, end users are less willing to invest time and they make on-the-spot judgments about the value of the knowledge and information presented. Further, about 80% of end users do not actually read but scan for knowledge and information. They will not scroll down a page if they are not convinced upfront that it contains useful data. And they do not like self-serving publicity. The implication for internet publication is simple: the challenge for disseminating the full content of research findings online is to convince end users to print the documents in which they are found.

- **Disseminating Successfully Online:** Building on this understanding of how people use the web, the operating principles are that websites must be scannable (because end users do not read),<sup>3</sup> concise (because end users do not scroll),<sup>4</sup> and objective (because end users do not like self-serving publicity).<sup>5</sup>

## POSTING RESEARCH IN A WEB-FRIENDLY WAY

Paradoxically, however, researchers are probably most averse to posting research online. The internet is a relatively new method of disseminating research findings that can upset long-standing conventions within research institutions. Despite persuasive, common-sense arguments to the contrary, some researchers are still not convinced of its usefulness. Others fret that their work will be pirated or that they will lose their status. To make matters worse, research writing is inherently not web-friendly.<sup>6</sup> All the more cause, then, to make a special effort:

- **Assisting End Users to Find Research:** Researchers can help end users find research findings without difficulty if they

display prominent links to the materials in the website; advertise examples of latest research with short, informative descriptions; make the work discernible to search engines with compelling page and section headings, page descriptions, and meta tags; and advise audiences, notably by electronic mail but also through other various marketing techniques, that research findings are available on the website.

- **Organizing Links to Documents:** Researchers must think outside the box. What is the perspective of outsiders who know little about a research institution? A helpful logic is to categorize materials by type, e.g., working paper, discussion paper, etc.; year of publication; and research theme. This logic must then be made obvious to end users by providing a menu at the top of the page enabling direct access to the section of interest. It is also helpful to make explicit that a document is downloadable or not. A customized search engine should be built if numerous documents are hosted on the website.
- **Selecting a Digital Format:** Documents featured on the website must be in a format that will enable end users to both open and print them. Documents should not be split or zipped.

## BUILDING ON COMMITMENT

Successful websites are not constructed in a corporate vacuum. They have a reason for being and a mission statement. They light the way and make navigation easy. They have ever-changing, targeted, and credible content. They load very quickly. They are consistent in look, feel, and design. They are interactive. They are marketed. They are measured. They understand search engines. They are built for growth and look to the future. ■

<sup>3</sup> This means using headings, breaking text into short sections, marking key knowledge and information-carrying words in bold, limiting each paragraph to one idea and stating what that is in the first sentence, using bullets and numbered lists, and splitting long text into multiple pages according to subject.

<sup>4</sup> This entails keeping to the subject; giving background information with hyperlinks to other pages; eschewing repetition, adjectives, and metaphors; using simple sentence structures; and writing in the active, not the passive.

<sup>5</sup> This requires composing for the audience, reining in superlatives and vague statements, presenting nothing as fact without providing evidence, avoiding exaggerations or self-congratulations, curbing promotional talk, and giving facts and letting end users decide what is relevant.

<sup>6</sup> The full-text version of research findings appears on a computer screen as a mass of text. Research papers are also commonly written in what is known as the pyramid style: starting with a foundation and gradually building to a conclusion. And the need to convey depth of knowledge and information is such that research writing can be wordy. And so research papers are not scannable or concise, nor do they satisfy the desire that most web users have for immediate gratification. In contrast, the internet has its own writing style, which serves to convey knowledge and information directly. It is akin to the journalistic style, which inverts the pyramid: starting with a conclusion, laying out essential information, and developing the background.







# Social Media and the Public Sector

Social media is revolutionizing the way we live, learn, work, and play. Elements of the private sector have begun to thrive on opportunities to forge, build, and deepen relationships. Some are transforming their organizational structures and opening their corporate ecosystems in consequence. The public sector is a relative newcomer. It too can drive stakeholder involvement and satisfaction.



## R.I.P. WEB 1.0

Global conversations, especially among Generation Y,<sup>1</sup> were born circa 2004. Beginning 1995 until then, the internet had hosted static, one-way websites. These were places to visit passively, retrieve information from, and perhaps post comments about by electronic mail.

Sixteen years later, Web 2.0<sup>2</sup> enables many-to-many connections in numerous domains of interest and practice, powered by the increasing use of blogs, image and video sharing, mashups, podcasts, ratings, Really Simple Syndication, social bookmarking, tweets, widgets, and wikis, among others. Today, people expect the internet to be user-centric.

Web 1.0 was about getting people connected, even though its applications were largely proprietary and only displayed information their owners wished to publish. More advanced (and cheap or free) software can now assume, correctly, that people stand ready to connect; it is therefore far more interactive and people-aware. Users generate content (e.g., blogs, Flickr, wikis), business intelligence (e.g., FreshBooks, Prosper), reviews and opinions (e.g., TripAdvisor), products (e.g., eBay), networks of contacts (e.g., Facebook, MySpace), statements on the value of web pages (e.g., Google PageRank), distributed storage and server capacity (e.g., Peer-to-Peer networks), connectivity (e.g., mesh networks, Wi-Fi sharing), and expressions of taste and emotion (e.g., Delicious, Last.fm) that search engines, not portals, fetch. Since traffic equals money, simple online economics drive uninterrupted change in the way we live, learn, work, and play.

The form that communications take is collectively dubbed as “social media.”<sup>3</sup> Where that is enriched by high levels of user interactions, the contents of the platforms promoting it across connected devices are in near-permanent “beta” stages of development, being and becoming at the same time, both As-Is and To-Be. In all instances, success hinges on a plausible promise, effective Web 2.0 applications, and an acceptable bargain with users.<sup>4</sup> Meaning is the new message.

“The loss of control you fear is already in the past.”

—Clay Shirky

The world may not yet be flat but technology is most assuredly leveling organizations and the silos in them: users have been given the tools to do things together in networks and no longer rely exclusively on the traditional structures, viz., functional, geographical, product, customer/market, or matrix organizations, that up to this time had enabled them to collaborate and contribute to serve common aims in (the lower echelons of) the

“As far as the customer is concerned, the interface is the product.”

—Jef Raskin

<sup>1</sup> Generation Y (also known as the Millennial Generation, Generation Next, or the Net Generation) describes the demographic group born between the mid-1970s and the early 2000s, with ages ranging 10–35 years. It is characterized by growing familiarity with communications, media, and digital technologies.

<sup>2</sup> The term “Web 2.0” refers to applications that facilitate interactive information sharing, interoperability, user-centered design, and collaboration on the internet. These are the result of cumulative changes in the ways software developers and users employ the internet as an information transport mechanism. Typical features and techniques include search, links, authoring, tags, extensions, and signals.

<sup>3</sup> Social media is an umbrella term. At its simplest, it is the integration of technology with social interaction to create value. It rests on internet tools that enable shared community experiences through multidirectional conversations that create, organize, edit, combine, and share content.

<sup>4</sup> See Clay Shirky. 2008. *Here Comes Everybody: The Power of Organizing Without Organizations*. The Penguin Press.



hierarchy of needs.<sup>5</sup> They are newly empowered and emboldened. Specifically, with positive (and, to the unprepared, negative) ramifications, information is far more transparent than in the past; users can access up-to-date information instantly on any topic; there are few barriers to involvement; and online communities therefore coalesce all of a sudden.

## CREATING VALUE IN COMMUNITIES

Social communities now exist in almost every conceivable domain. However, four broad types of online communities have morphed into Web 2.0 entities in a new, horizontal architecture of participation and connection that prizes credibility.<sup>6</sup> They are relationship-, interest-, transaction-, and fantasy-oriented. Communities of the first type organize around (usually) intense life experiences that lead to personal bonding between members. In the second type, interactions center on topics of common interest. The third type of community revolves around facilitated buying and selling of products and services and the delivery of information that supports transactions.<sup>7</sup> The fourth type plays roles in simulated environments.

These four types of online communities hold significant value-creation potential for users, public sector agencies, nongovernment organizations, and the private sector. Opportunities to add value through new channels lie pell-mell in content addition; subscription revenues; closer understanding

of explicit or latent needs; product or service ideation or creation; and better targeting of market segments. Naturally, the scope for value creation hinges on the particulars of a community and who organizes its space. Nonetheless, well-designed and well-implemented social media brings with it the power of every user on the planet: its influence can only grow because, unlike in the past, control is shared with the crowd and very real feedback is fast. Users generate content and voice their feelings far and wide. From “wisdom of the crowd”<sup>8</sup> reactions, organizations can collect detailed information on users, build valuable relationships through conversations about people’s experiences, deploy higher levels of engagement, and refine offerings and related messages to better match needs. The uses of social media are boundless: Web 2.0, a.k.a the Social or Relationship Web, amounts to nothing less than a massive social experiment.

## GROWING WEB 2.0 ORGANIZATIONS ...

Many individuals already use Web 2.0 applications every day and consider life without these unimaginable. As time flies, a greater percentage of the population will feel the same. Already, younger personnel expect to work in organizations where Web 2.0 is the norm and are dismayed to discover that many of the applications they use in their personal lives are not available professionally. What is more, today’s teenagers will soon enter the workforce.

### Box: Examples of Social Media Sites<sup>9</sup>

Craigslist—classified ads. Available: [www.craigslist.org/about/sites](http://www.craigslist.org/about/sites)  
Delicious—social bookmarking. Available: <http://delicious.com/>  
Digg—social news. Available: [www.digg.com](http://www.digg.com)  
Engadget—gadget news and reviews. Available: [www.engadget.com/](http://www.engadget.com/)  
Facebook—social networking. Available: [www.facebook.com](http://www.facebook.com)  
Flickr—photo sharing. Available: [www.flickr.com](http://www.flickr.com)  
Flixster—movie reviews and ratings. Available: [www.flixster.com/](http://www.flixster.com/)  
LinkedIn—professional networking. Available: [www.linkedin.com](http://www.linkedin.com)  
MyBlogLog—blog networking. Available: [www.mybloglog.com](http://www.mybloglog.com)  
MySpace Music—music sharing. Available: [www.myspace.com/](http://www.myspace.com/)  
Netvibes—information aggregator. Available: [www.netvibes.com/#general](http://www.netvibes.com/#general)

Source: Author.

Ning—social network space. Available: [www.ning.com/](http://www.ning.com/)  
NutshellMail—social network aggregation. Available: <http://nutshellmail.com/>  
Second Life—virtual worlds. Available: <http://secondlife.com/>  
Slideshare—presentation sharing. Available: [www.slideshare.net/](http://www.slideshare.net/)  
Twitter—microblogging. Available: <http://twitter.com/>  
Wikipedia—web-based encyclopedia. Available: <http://en.wikipedia.org/>  
WordPress—open source blog publishing application. Available: <http://wordpress.org/>  
Yahoo! Answers—community answers. Available: <http://answers.yahoo.com/>  
YouTube—video sharing. Available: [www.youtube.com](http://www.youtube.com)

<sup>5</sup> The phenomenon of Web 2.0 jives with other societal trends. They include demographic changes, the consumerization of information and communication technology, the empowerment of consumers, the gradual move from hierarchical to network-based forms of organizations, the rise of the knowledge worker, the accent on creativity and innovation, and the growing importance of informal learning.

<sup>6</sup> For bloggers, for example, endorsement value is a function of their authority on a given topic, their network’s interest in and authority on the topic, and the trust level among the network on the topic.

<sup>7</sup> The chief attraction here is that social media eliminates inefficient middlemen and lowers the cost of products and services.

<sup>8</sup> Borrowing a leaf from James Surowiecki, judicious use of Web 2.0 applications can promote the diversity of opinion, independence, decentralization, and aggregation needed to form a wise crowd. See James Surowiecki. 2004. *The Wisdom of Crowds: Why the Many Are Smarter Than the Few and How Collective Wisdom Shapes Business, Economies, Societies, and Nations*. Doubleday.

<sup>9</sup> All industries and technologies experience consolidation, and social media is no exception. Many Web 2.0 applications are absorbed by others. Facebook, for instance, grew after its acquisition of FriendFeed in 2009. New entrants will continue to challenge incumbents because the Social Web allows for rapid prototyping, failure, and adaptation.

**Table: Short Glossary of Web 2.0 Terminology<sup>10</sup>**

Form	Description
Blog	Short for web log, an editor-less, chronologically ordered journal of commentary and descriptions of events, written in a conversational tone, sometimes accompanied by other material such as graphics or video, that is frequently updated with permanent links to other sources and contains entries inviting comments.
Chat	Interaction on a website with users adding text items in sequence into the same space at almost the same time.
Crowdsourcing	A compound of crowd and outsourcing the broadcast by an initiating agent of problems in need of solutions to a group of solvers, with convergent interests and behaviors, in the form of an open call.
Folksonomy	A system of classification, sometimes visualized as word clouds, derived from the method and practice of collaboratively creating and managing user-defined labels or tags to annotate and categorize content.
Image and Video Sharing Site	A user-generated website that allows users to upload pictures or videos and view and comment on those of others.
Internet Forum	Also called a message board, a discussion area on a website where users can discuss issues with asynchronous posts.
Mashup	An application combining data from two or more external sources into a single integrated tool that performs a new service.
Metadata	Structured information that describes—and allows users to find, manage, control, and understand—other information.
Microblogging	A web service that allows users to write tweets and publish them to be viewed and commented upon by their network.
Mobile Text Messaging	Short messages of text exchanged between mobile devices.
Mobile Web	A mobile device incorporating a web browser to access the internet.
Podcast	Audio or video “show” made available on the internet, usually through a subscription, for downloading to personal computers or mobile devices.
Really Simple Syndication Feed	A file that contains regularly updated information such as news headlines or blog posts and can be subscribed to using aggregators or newsreaders.
Social Bookmarking	A method enabling users to store, organize, search, and manage bookmarks of websites.
Social Media	Online technologies and practices that users leverage to share concepts, experiences, insights, opinions, and perspectives in social interface.
Social Networking	The process of engaging in online communities, typically through “groups” and “friends lists,” that allows users to connect and interact with like-minded parties.
Tweet	A single message or status update of up to 140 characters that can be read by users following individuals on Twitter, a microblogging service, or the act of posting it.
Virtual World	A computer-based simulated game environment in which users interact with one another via avatars, viz., virtual representations of themselves, typically in the form of two- or three-dimensional cartoonish representations of humanoids.
Widget	Also called a gadget, badge, or applet, a piece of self-contained, transportable code, often displayed in a small box, that can be embedded into a website or program to perform a specific function, such as providing weather forecasts or news.
Wiki	Collaborative publishing technology, often taken to mean a collection of webpages that allows users to work on and modify content online with appropriate version control.

Source: Author.

<sup>10</sup> Social media builds on existing platforms for communication and collaboration. They include face-to-face meetings, telephone calls, paper mail, fax, and so on. Those where information and communication technologies come to the fore include electronic mail, instant messaging, desktop sharing, person availability, video conferencing, Voice over Internet Protocol, and web conferencing.



This groundswell invites public sector agencies, nongovernment organizations, and the private sector to engage, innovate, and create relevance according to the types of relationships they want. Organizations and Web 2.0 are not the easiest fit: sometimes, a cultural shift must happen for technology to make a difference. But all must learn how to stay nimble and flexible in an ever-changing digital environment.

Elements of the private sector have begun to thrive on opportunities to forge, build, and deepen relationships with people, both internally and externally. From the early adoption of Web 2.0 applications such as blogs and wikis, they are expanding the mix of tools and shifting from using them experimentally to embedding them in business processes.<sup>11</sup> Some are transforming organizational structures and opening corporate ecosystems in consequence, for example, by encouraging clients, audiences, and partners to join them in developing products. They can now reach mass audiences, target niche markets, craft messages, and create great client experiences, cost-effectively, in ways they only dreamed about before. To build Web 2.0-friendly cultures that are transparent, agile, creative, user-centric, and empowering these high-performance organizations at once asked themselves:

- How can we use Web 2.0 applications to be more successful?
- How can we leverage them to fuse the knowledge, skills, and resources of clients, audiences, and partners?
- How will they change the way we operate?
- How can they help us protect and nurture our brand and reputation?
- How can we use them to identify, recruit, develop, deploy, and retain talent?
- How can we ensure that the information we do not want to share stays in-house?

**“If your target audience isn’t listening, it’s not their fault, it’s yours.”**

—Seth Godin

### ... IN THE PUBLIC SECTOR ...

Driven by internally focused objectives rather than a service-delivery mentality, bureaucratic in decision making, traditionally slow to change, saddled with top-down hierarchical structures in which positional authority no longer compels, the public sector is a relative newcomer to social media. On the social technographics ladder, most public sector organizations are inactive<sup>12</sup> that continue to rely on yesterday’s technology to address tomorrow’s problems.<sup>13</sup> They must change their world or the world will change them. Accepting that the internet is increasing the economic and social value of the information they hold and harvest, they must stretch mindsets to understand emerging mental models and equip themselves with the right policies, strategies, resources, delivery mechanisms, and management skills to take part in collaborative relationships in the digital economy. Why should they do so? First, the public sector bears social responsibility for embracing change—else, it faces reputational risk. Second, the social media will soon play a major role in defining how public sector organizations are considered: their accomplishments are measured not just by what they do but also, more and more, by perceptions of that.<sup>14</sup> Third, and most important, Web 2.0 applications offer unprecedented opportunities to achieve more simple, user-oriented, transparent, accountable, participative, inclusive, responsive, joined-up, networked, and efficient government.<sup>15</sup> To reap these, public sector organizations must meet people where they are. Increasingly, that is online. All the time more, they will need to be aided by third parties acting as intermediaries in providing more granular, or component-based, content and services, with implications for the design of these.

For Web 2.0 applications, the most favorable context is high trust, collaborative, and knowledge intensive. Three aspects, all having to do with management (including that

**“Decision by democratic majority vote is a fine form of government, but it’s a stinking way to create.”**

—Lillian Hellman

<sup>11</sup> Internally, in declining order of incidence, the primary purposes of Web 2.0 applications are to manage knowledge, foster collaboration across the organization, enhance corporate culture, conduct training, and develop products and services. When interfacing with clients, audiences, and partners, again in declining order of incidence, the main objectives are to improve customer service, acquire new customers in existing markets, invite customer contributions to product development, and enable customers to interact. See McKinsey & Co. 2008. Building the Web 2.0 Enterprise. *McKinsey Quarterly*. July.

<sup>12</sup> See Charlene Li and Josh Bernoff. 2008. *Groundswell: Winning in a World Transformed by Social Technologies*. Harvard Business School Publishing. At the top of the ladder are creators (who publish and upload). They are followed in turn by critics (who post ratings and reviews, comment, and contribute to internet forums and wikis); collectors (who organize content using RSS feeds, tags, and voting sites); joiners (who connect in social networks such as Facebook and MySpace); spectators (who read blogs, watch videos, listen to podcasts, and read online forums and ratings and reviews); and inactive (who neither create nor consume social content of any kind).

<sup>13</sup> In some of them, to break the fetters of command-and-control, communities and networks of practice spontaneously come together using team collaboration and content-sharing software such as Lotus Quickr.

<sup>14</sup> Every organization has a brand and that is constantly under threat. Clients, audiences, and partners have always had an idea about what brands signify, and their ideas may vary from the images organizations are trying to project. Web 2.0 applications elicit opinions in real time.

<sup>15</sup> Social media can (i) amplify access to clients, audiences, and partners and improve the accessibility of the public sector’s communications; (ii) enable the public sector to be more active in its relationships; (iii) offer greater scope to adjust or refocus communications quickly, where necessary; (iv) improve the long-term cost effectiveness of communications; (v) benefit from the credibility of nongovernment channels; (vi) speed feedback and input; (vii) reach market segments on specific issues; and (viii) reduce the public sector’s dependence on traditional media channels and counter inaccurate press coverage.

of human resources), favor success on the Social Web: a lack of internal barriers to Web 2.0,<sup>16</sup> a culture that favors cooperation, and early adoption of Web 2.0 applications for communication, interaction, and service. (Web 2.0, as much else, is about people, not technology.) For this, public sector organizations must develop social media strategies across multiple networks, both internally and externally focused: from how their personnel should conduct themselves as employees<sup>17</sup> to what is considered competition. The transition they must accomplish requires strong leadership for engagement by senior managers (whom most surveys discover cannot easily grasp the potential returns from Web 2.0); competency in forging, building, and deepening relationships on the internet; policies to both protect organizational assets and ensure appropriate personnel behavior;<sup>18</sup> and, finally, training so that everyone understands Web 2.0 applications, how to use them in the context of the organization, and their respective roles.

**“ You can never cross the ocean unless you have the courage to lose sight of the shore. ”**

— Christopher Columbus

### ... IN QUICK STEPS

In the 21st century, three broad challenges are plain to see: emerging global issues, rising citizen expectations, and aging populations. In the age of the internet, Web 2.0 applications dictate how responsive the public sector must be.<sup>19</sup> A shared vision for the journey necessarily encompasses stakeholders (who to engage with), reason (rationale for acting), activity (what to do), and tools (how to do it). In quick steps, public sector organizations can start with the following:<sup>20</sup>

- Edify the organization by helping personnel at all levels realize what Web 2.0 applications are and how they can help it recognize and manage fast-evolving explicit or latent needs.
- Craft social media policies that capitalize on the benefits of adopting Web 2.0 applications in the organization, including policies for individual departments.
- Formulate social media strategies that delineate clear priorities and determine the opportunity or requirement for online collaboration aligned to evolving organizational mandates.
- Evaluate existing technologies to determine their compatibility with morphing Web 2.0 applications.
- Launch internal and external pilots that, with an eye to authenticity as well as risk and governance frameworks, identify and act on specific opportunities to drive early success and enable departments to familiarize themselves with Web 2.0 applications, understand the management required, and refine their objectives for subsequent initiatives.

<sup>16</sup> Potential barriers stem from demographics, reliance on outdated hardware or software that cannot access or use Web 2.0 applications, and institutional blockers from various units. In the public sector, blockers typically include offices of information systems and technology, external relations, and the general counsel as well as line managers. Tools of control cannot be condoned but legitimate concerns over legal, privacy, and information technology issues; media and communications; and security should be addressed through policy, process, education, and training.

<sup>17</sup> See, for instance, IBM. 2010. *IBM Social Computing Guidelines*. Available: [www.ibm.com/blogs/zz/en/guidelines.html](http://www.ibm.com/blogs/zz/en/guidelines.html) The guidelines give advice for appropriate behavior by personnel when they interface on blogs, wikis, social networks, and virtual worlds. Personnel are expected to act professionally, respectfully, and responsibly. The guidelines are measured and balance the need to protect the company while encouraging collaboration, creativity, and innovation. They recognize that personnel need to make their own decisions about the extent of their contributions.

<sup>18</sup> The key is risk management, not risk avoidance. The spectrum of activities of a public servant on the Social Web, for example, ranges from the individual to the professional to the official. As an individual, he or she might express private views and take part in social networks in both private and professional capacities. As a professional, he or she might explore alternatives or present authoritative views. As an official, he or she might discuss the organization's policies or represent them.

<sup>19</sup> Usefully, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development has articulated 13 principles to provide a general framework for the wider and more effective use of public sector information and content and the generation of new uses from it. They relate to openness, access and transparent conditions for reuse, asset lists, quality, integrity, new technologies and long-term preservation, copyright, pricing, competition, redress mechanisms, public-private partnerships, international access and use, and best practices. Some would argue that timeliness and metadata should have been given more prominence in the list. See OECD. 2008. *OECD Recommendation of the Council for Enhanced Access and More Effective Use of Public Sector Information*. Available: [www.oecd.org/dataoecd/0/27/40826024.pdf](http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/0/27/40826024.pdf)

<sup>20</sup> Wider scope can be found in (i) identifying problems, opportunities, or future issues; (ii) policy consultations; (iii) service and service delivery; and (iv) promotion and communication.



- Define broader scopes for online engagement as a new way of working through the lifecycle of listen and identify, inform, consult and involve, and collaborate and empower.
- Measure engagement by focusing on the usability of Web 2.0 applications and the extent of engagement as a result of their use.
- Gauge effectiveness by examining the degree to which Web 2.0 applications help create new relevant knowledge and solve cases.
- Inculcate a culture of collaboration by relentlessly progressing how interactions with clients, audiences, and partners take place inside and outside of the organization.
- Foster organizational learning from pilots and regular initiatives based on measurements of engagement and effectiveness and comments from clients, audiences, and partners. ■

### FURTHER READING

Don Tapscott and Anthony Williams. 2006. *Wikinomics: How Mass Collaboration Changes Everything*. Atlantic Books.

Government 2.0 Taskforce. 2009. *Engage: Getting on with Government 2.0: Report of the Government 2.0 Taskforce*. Available: [www.finance.gov.au/publications/gov20taskforcereport/doc/government20taskforcereport.pdf](http://www.finance.gov.au/publications/gov20taskforcereport/doc/government20taskforcereport.pdf)







# Storytelling

Storytelling is the use of stories or narratives as a communication tool to value, share, and capitalize on the knowledge of individuals.



## DEFINITION

Storytelling is the vivid description of ideas, beliefs, personal experiences, and life-lessons through stories or narratives that evoke powerful emotions and insights.

## ADVANTAGES

Storytelling has advantages over the communication techniques commonly used in organizations, be they electronic mail, reports, or formal speeches. First, it enables articulation of emotional aspects as well as factual content, allowing expression of tacit knowledge (that is always difficult to convey). Second, by providing the broader context in which knowledge arises, it increases the potential for meaningful knowledge-sharing. Third, by grounding facts in a narrative structure, it augments the likelihood that learning will take place and be passed on. Purposeful storytelling can deliver results that conventional, abstract modes of communications, such as those mentioned earlier, cannot. Anyone can use it and become better at using it to reach many rapidly.

## COMMUNICATING NATURALLY

The age-old practice of storytelling is one of the most effective tools that people can use. Storytellers communicate naturally: analysis might excite the mind but it does not offer an easy route to the heart, which is where one must go to motivate people. Working with stories is one of the best ways to

- Make abstract concepts meaningful.
- Help connect people and ideas.
- Inspire imagination and motivate action.
- Give breathing space and allow different perspectives to emerge.
- Create sense, coherence, and meaning.
- Develop valuable descriptions of the situations in which knowledge is applied and solutions are found.
- Examine organizational values and culture.
- Communicate complex messages simply.
- Operate effectively in networks.
- Inspire change.

**Table 1: The Difference Between a Report and a Story**

Version A	Version B
<p>In our evaluation of a project in Bangladesh, we noted a wide variance in the competence of individual villages to develop sustainable and effective solutions to problems encountered, for example in replacing broken parts or developing low-cost products such as new latrines. The lessons to be learned from this evaluation are that we should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• work against over-dependence on development partners,</li><li>• note and encourage entrepreneurial approaches to problems,</li><li>• identify existing and repeatable good practices,</li><li>• build and strengthen communication between villages to assist cross-fertilization of ideas at the grassroots level.</li></ul>	<p>Bangladesh is a really impressive place... in a positive sense. I was in a village last year working in water and sanitation. We were trying to promote the use of improved latrines, but could not produce concrete slabs and rings locally for a low cost. Somebody told me to visit the latrines of a lady in the village, so I went along and said, "Can I see your latrines?" She had made a latrine out of a clay pot with the bottom cut off. Then, with a potter from the area, she developed a small local production of bottomless pots, and they became the latrines. Ingenious.</p> <p>A few weeks later I was in another village and saw a hand pump; it was broken, just a small piece missing. So I said to the villagers, "Why don't you repair your pump?" And they said, "Oh, we just wait for another donor to bring a new pump." So I said, "Why don't you visit the lady in the village over there? She finds ways of getting things done for herself."</p>

Source: Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation. 2005. *Story Guide: Building Bridges Using Narrative Techniques*. Berne. Available: [www.deza.admin.ch/ressources/resource\\_en\\_155620.pdf](http://www.deza.admin.ch/ressources/resource_en_155620.pdf)



**Table 2: A Storytelling Catalogue**

If your objective is to	You will need a story that	In telling it, you will need to	Your story will inspire such responses as
Spark action	Describes how a successful change was implemented in the past, but allows listeners to imagine how it might work in their situation	Avoid excessive detail that will take the audience's mind off its own challenge	"Just imagine..." "What if..."
Communicate who you are	Provides audience-engaging drama and reveals some strength or vulnerability from your past	Include meaningful details, but also make sure the audience has the time and inclination to hear your story	"I didn't know that about him!" "Now I see what she's driving at."
Transmit values	Feels familiar to the audience and will prompt discussion about the issues raised by the value being promoted	Use believable (though perhaps hypothetical) characters and situations, and never forget that the story must be consistent with your own actions	"That's so right!" "Why don't we do that all the time?"
Foster collaboration	Movingly recounts a situation that listeners have also experienced and that prompts them to share their own stories about the topic	Ensure that a set agenda does not squelch this swapping of stories—and that you have an action plan ready to tap the energy unleashed by this narrative chain reaction	"That reminds me of the time that I..." "Hey, I've got a story like that."
Tame the grapevine	Highlights, often through the use of gentle humor, some aspect of a rumor that reveals it to be untrue or unlikely	Avoid the temptation to be mean-spirited, and be sure that the rumor is indeed false	"No kidding!" "I'd never thought about it like that before!"
Share knowledge	Focuses on mistakes made and shows in some detail how they were corrected, with an explanation of why the solution worked	Solicit alternative—and possibly better—solutions	"There but for the grace of God ..." "Wow! We'd better watch that from now on."
Lead people into the future	Evokes the future you want to create without providing excessive detail that will only turn out to be wrong	Be sure of your storytelling skills (otherwise, use a story in which the past can serve as a springboard to the future)	"When do we start?" "Let's do it!"

Source: Steven Denning. 2004. Telling Tales. *Harvard Business Review*. May. pp. 122–129. Available: <https://engineering.purdue.edu/MECOM/Assignments/Telling-Tales-HBR.pdf>

**Table 3: Storytelling Template for Use in Workshops**

<b>The Title of the Story:</b>
<b>The Name of the Original Teller:</b>
<b>The Name of the Listener or Understander:</b>
<b>Landscape:</b> The scene in time (year) and space (country)
<b>Dwelling Place:</b> The precise location where the action occurred
<b>Characters:</b> The cast list, descriptive attributes, and roles in story
<b>Challenge:</b> The problem or task that triggered the action
<b>Action:</b> The sequence of events before, during, and after the turning point
<b>The Turning Point:</b> The moment when the change happened
<b>Resolution:</b> The ending, including the moral, lesson learned, or message
<b>Key Visual Hooks:</b> Mnemonics to help partners re-tell the story

Source: Adapted from Sparknow Consulting. Available: [www.sparknow.net](http://www.sparknow.net)

## APPLICATIONS

Storytelling is used to identify and exchange learning episodes, explore values and inspire people toward the possibility of change, enrich quantitative information with qualitative evidence, make out connections and create common purpose, and improve the effectiveness of strategic decisions. Potential applications of stories include

- oral histories
- team or community-building exercises
- workshop warm-ups
- back-to-office reports
- activity or project reviews
- monitoring and evaluation systems
- recreation

## ELEMENTS OF A GOOD STORY

Good stories are generally interesting, unusual, provocative, serious, controversial, surprising, intriguing, or inspiring. They

- Respond to demand.
- Exploit a specific opportunity.
- Include personal and human elements of experience.
- Present the point of view of someone who has been directly involved.
- Use a variety of narrative patterns for different aims.

- Achieve a balance between words from persons and statements from organizations.
- Recount a successful intervention.
- Describe an unsuccessful intervention.
- Provide a solution to both immediate and broader problems.
- Play to what is already in people's minds.
- Target people with the authority to make decisions and change things.

## CAVEATS

Storytelling is not suitable for every situation and there may be instances when they are not the right choice. That is when the audience does not want one, when analysis would be better, when the story is not ready, or when a story would be deceptive. In some working contexts, storytelling will require patience and management backing for a long time. ■

## FURTHER READING

Steve Denning's website. Available: [www.stevedenning.com](http://www.stevedenning.com)  
 Ingie Hovland, I. 2005. Successful Communication: A Toolkit for Researchers and Civil Society Organizations. *ODI Working Paper 227*. London: ODI. Available: [www.odi.org.uk/rapid/publications/documents/comms\\_tools\\_web.pdf](http://www.odi.org.uk/rapid/publications/documents/comms_tools_web.pdf)



### KNOWLEDGE SHARING AND LEARNING

Two-way communications that take place simply and effectively build knowledge.



# Using Plain English

Many people write too much, bureaucratically, and obscurely. Using plain English will save time in writing, make writing far easier, and improve understanding.



## PURPOSE

Reports are a visible part of work. They remain and are used long after it is done. Work is advanced by readable<sup>1</sup> reports that give the target audience a good chance of understanding the document at first reading, and in the sense that the writers meant them to be.

## WHAT IS PLAIN ENGLISH?

Plain English—or plain language—is a message written for the reader in a style that is clear and concise. It is quicker to write, faster to read, and puts messages across more often, more easily, and in friendlier ways. Using plain English, writers should

- Select simple words.
- Make lists.
- Keep sentences short.
- Refrain from giving unnecessary details.
- Cut down on jargon and use defined terms sparingly.
- Discard superfluous words.
- Reduce nominalizations.<sup>2</sup>
- Avoid weak verbs.
- Use the active voice with strong verbs.
- Be specific rather than general.
- Write personally, as if you were talking to the reader.

## KNOWING THE AUDIENCE

Knowing the target audience is the most important step in assuring that a document is understandable. One can create a profile of individual target audiences based on the following questions:

- What are the demographics of the audience, e.g., age, education, and work experience?
- How familiar is the audience with technical terminology?

- What concepts can one safely assume the audience understands?
- How will the audience read the document for the first time? Will they read it straight through or will they skip to sections of particular interest? What data and information will they look for, and is it easy to find?
- How will the audience use the document?

## KNOWING THE INFORMATION TO DISCLOSE

The following steps can be taken to ascertain that a document written in plain English is readable:

- Read and outline the current document.
  - Read the table of contents to see if there is an obvious logical flow to the argument.
  - Read the entire document without taking notes to gain a general understanding of the information presented.
  - Read the entire document a second time, taking notes on what information is covered and what questions the target audience might have. The notes will show if the information flows through the document in logical order.
  - As you read, consider the following: Will the audience understand the language? Does the document emphasize information of importance to the audience? Is any important information missing? Does the document include information that is not required and will not help the audience make informed decisions?
- Eliminate redundant information.
  - Question the need for repeating any information. Reading similar material more than once bores—perhaps even troubles—readers.
  - Readers skip over paragraphs they think they have read before.

<sup>1</sup> Merriam-Webster's defines "readable" as pleasing, interesting, or offering no great difficulty to the reader.

<sup>2</sup> A nominalization is a noun derived from a verb. It usually ends in -tion. To make writing more vigorous and less abstract, writers should find the noun and try to make it the main verb of the sentence. For example, "We made an application" becomes "We applied."

- Discuss the executive summary.
  - An executive summary is an inviting entryway to a document. It should orient the reader, highlighting the most important points that are presented in detail in the document.
  - Many executive summaries seem as long as the document itself and all-too-often consist of paragraphs copied from the main text.

### APPLYING THE RULE OF 15

A rule of thumb for preparing plain English reports is to use the “rule of 15:”

- Not more than 15% of sentences should be longer than 15 words.
- Not more than 15% of sentences should be written in the passive voice.
- Not more than 15% of words should be longer than three syllables.

### EDITING THE DOCUMENT

When it is time to edit the document, it is best to work in the following order:

- Edit for overall structure.
- Edit for sequencing and logical flow within subsections.
- Edit for plain English.
- Edit for style conventions.
- Edit for typographical errors and punctuation.

### CHECKING MICROSOFT WORD'S READABILITY STATISTICS

Microsoft Word allows users to check how difficult text is to read.<sup>3</sup> Aim for

- Flesch Reading Ease score >50 (higher scores are easier to read).
- Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level score <12 (lower scores are easier to read).

### USING READABILITY FORMULAS AND STYLE CHECKERS

Readability formulas establish how difficult a document is to read. Several websites offer free readability services online. They include

- **Gunning Fog Index.** Available: <http://simbon.madpage.com/fog/>
- **Online Utility.** Available: [www.online-utility.org/english/readability\\_test\\_and\\_improve.jsp](http://www.online-utility.org/english/readability_test_and_improve.jsp)
- **Juicy Studio.** Available: <http://juicystudio.com/services/readability.php> ■

### FURTHER READING

ADB. 2002. *Handbook on Correspondence and Writing*. Manila.

———. 2009. *Handbook of Style and Usage*. Manila. Available: [www.adb.org/documents/handbooks/style\\_usage/hsu-2009-edition.pdf](http://www.adb.org/documents/handbooks/style_usage/hsu-2009-edition.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> On the Tools menu, click Options, and then click the Spelling and Grammar tab. Select the Check grammar with spelling check box. Select the Show readability statistics check box, and then click OK. On the Standard toolbar, click Spelling and Grammar.



#### KNOWLEDGE SHARING AND LEARNING

Two-way communications that take place simply and effectively build knowledge.



# Knowledge Capture and Storage



# Assessing the Effectiveness of Assistance in Capacity Development



Feedback is the dynamic process of presenting and disseminating information to improve performance. Feedback mechanisms are increasingly being recognized as key elements of learning before, during, and after. Assessments by executing agencies of the effectiveness of assistance in capacity development are prominent among these.

## RATIONALE

Feedback is a circular causal process whereby some portion of a system's output is returned to the input to control the dynamic behavior of the system. In organizations, feedback is the process of sharing observations, concerns, and suggestions to improve performance. In work that seeks to address the increasingly complex challenges of development, often with limited resources, feedback is essential to maximize development impact. *Knowledge Solutions: Monthly Progress Notes* asserts that the essential first steps of feedback are the processes of monitoring and evaluation. They identify challenges, recognize common constraints, and note that the submission of monthly progress notes on activities and accomplishments is too infrequently provided in the scope of projects and programs. There are opportunities too for more systematic capture and storage of feedback from executing agencies on the effectiveness of assistance in capacity development, prior to knowledge sharing and learning.

## ASSESSING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF ASSISTANCE IN CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT

Capacity development is the process whereby people, organizations, and society as a whole unleash, strengthen, create, adapt, and maintain capacity over time. In 2005, the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness called for capacity development to be an explicit objective of the national development and poverty reduction strategies of partner countries. Bilateral and multilateral agencies, among others, have responded by elevating capacity development in their operations, and given attention to factors that drive success and factors that deter from it.

In 2008, a special evaluation study of the Independent Evaluation Department in ADB on the effectiveness of ADB's capacity development assistance classified these positive and negative factors into four categories: (i) design and quality-at-entry factors within ADB's control, (ii) design and quality-at-entry beyond ADB's control, (iii) implementation factors within ADB's control, and (iv) implementation factors beyond ADB's control. Since the success drivers in categories (i) and (iii) are design and quality-at-entry factors as well as implementation factors within ADB's control, they can be achieved through improvement in ADB's design and implementation practices for capacity development interventions. Since the success drivers in categories (ii) and (iv) are design and quality-at-entry factors, as well as implementation factors beyond ADB's control, which are contextual or external level factors by nature, they tend to act as incentives (opportunities) to capacity development performance. However, the negative side of these factors will tend to act as risks or constraints (threats) to capacity development performance. The study noted that although ADB has no direct control over these risks, some of them should be identified and mitigation mechanisms formulated during the design stage with good diagnostics. In more challenging environments, it may be necessary to be more realistic by developing a phased approach to capacity development interventions, or deferring them until some of these risks are addressed.

Presumably, the findings of the study are relevant elsewhere. Further, much remains to be done to put the preconditions for such good practices in place. This does not necessarily call for reinvention of the wheel. Development agencies can, by doing less and doing it well, do better for capacity development.



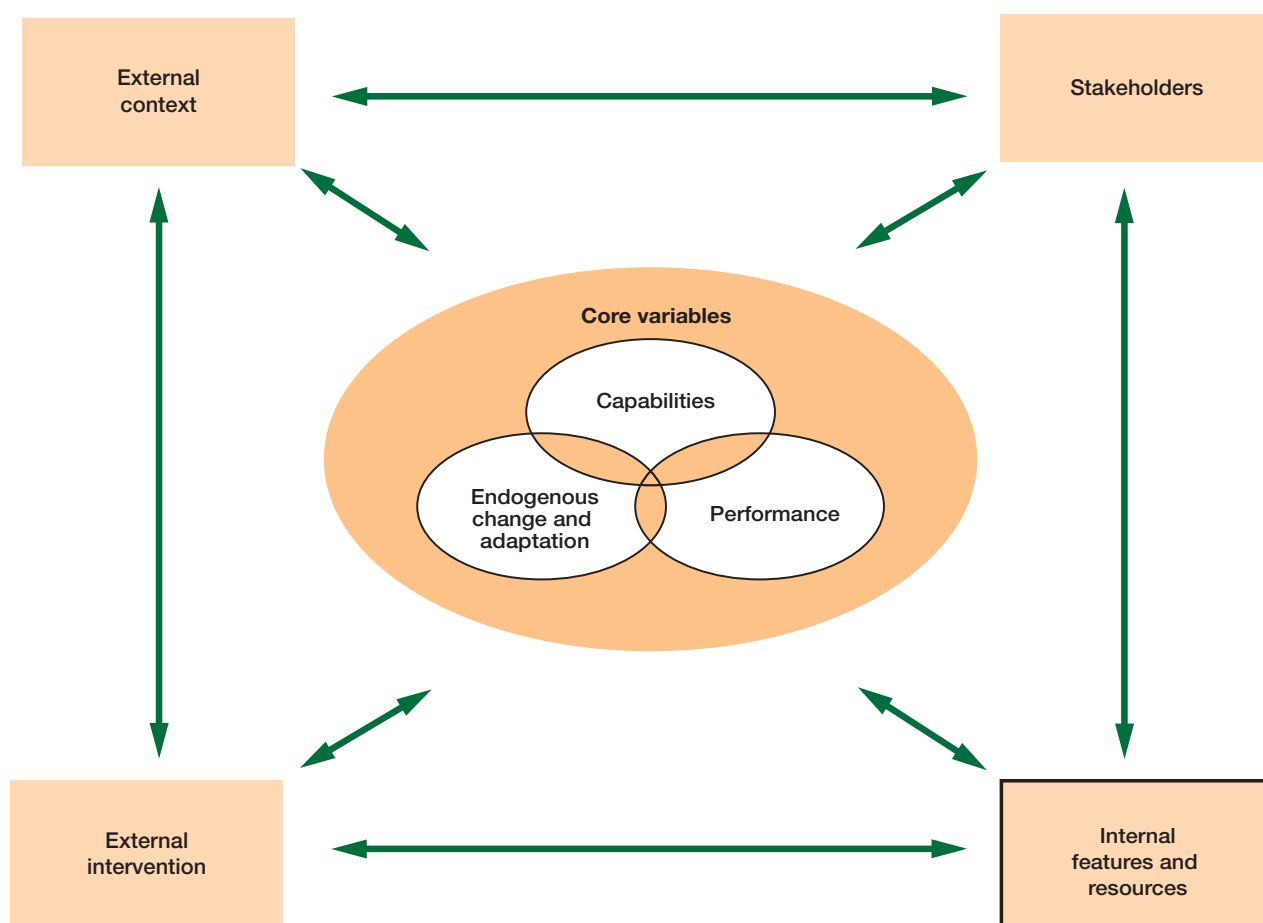
Simple knowledge management tools that harvest experience for subsequent sharing and use are at hand. With regard to the technical assistance modality that donors often use, the tool described below shows how to invite feedback on preparation, design, and implementation; the performance of consultants; the contribution to change management, policy development, and capacity building; and constraints to implementation.

### TEMPLATE

The questionnaire<sup>1</sup> laid out below provides guidance on the preparation by executing agencies of assessments of the effectiveness of capacity development in the form of

a recommended format and a description of the contents required. Naturally, flexibility in the use of the questionnaire should be exercised as it is intended to introduce approximate conformance in the more obvious components of monitoring and evaluation. The figure below suggests that there are seven of these: (i) capabilities, (ii) endogenous change and adaptation, (iii) performance, (iv) external context, (v) stakeholders, (vi) external interventions, and (vii) internal features and key resources. The assessment, completed at the end of a technical assistance, should be submitted by the executing agency to the donor concerned, and inform both the preparation of technical assistance completion reports and the formulation of next steps. ■

**Figure: Simplified Analytic Framework for Monitoring and Evaluation of Capacity and Capacity Development**



Source: European Centre for Development Policy Management. 2006. Monitoring and Evaluation of Capacity and Capacity Development. Discussion Paper No. 58B. Maastricht. Available: [www.ecdpm.org/dp58b](http://www.ecdpm.org/dp58b)

<sup>1</sup> Source: Adapted from ADB. 1996. *Special Study on Assessment of the Effectiveness of Bank Technical Assistance for Capacity Building in Indonesia*. Manila.



## Assessing the Effectiveness of Assistance in Capacity Development: A Questionnaire for Executing Agencies

Technical Assistance Data					
TA Title					
TA Number					
Executing agency					
TA Amount					
Date Approved					
TA Objective					
Technical Assistance Preparation					
1.	How high was the TA's objective in the government's overall priorities at the time, as indicated, for instance in the Five-Year Development Plan at the time or later?	High	Medium	Low	Do not know
2.	Was the TA's objective a high priority of the executing agency at that time?	Yes		No	Do not know
3.	Who was the principal player in identifying the need for the TA?	ADB	Government	Executing agency	Do not know
4.	How satisfactory was the process of developing the terms of reference for the TA in terms of adequate consultation with the staff of the executing agency?	Very satisfactory	Satisfactory	Not satisfactory	Do not know
	4a. If not satisfactory: please cite the major reasons.				
5.	Was a satisfactory process for institutional strengthening (i.e., enabling the executing agency itself to build on the outputs of the TA) developed before the TA was accepted by the executing agency (e.g., starting with a diagnostic analysis)?	Yes		No	Do not know
6.	Before the start of the TA, did the executing agency realistically consider that, by the end of the TA, it would gain the technical expertise to do the desired work itself?	Yes		No	Do not know
7.	Were the major constraints, both inside and outside the executing agency, which could prevent the effective completion of the TA satisfactorily addressed prior to the terms of reference being finalized?	Yes		No	Do not know
	7a. If yes, please indicate whether the constraints were	Internal		External	
	7b. If no, please list the major constraints not addressed. (See Annex for a sample of constraints and problems.)				
Technical Assistance Design					
8.	How satisfactory was the design of the TA to achieve its objective?	Very satisfactory	Satisfactory	Not satisfactory	Do not know
	8a. If satisfactory, please list strengths.	If not satisfactory: please list weaknesses.			
9.	How important was the TA's objective to the work of the executing agency?	Very important	Important	Not very important	No opinion
	9a. In what way were they important?				
	• From a technical point of view?				
	• From an institutional strengthening point of view?				
10.	Did the design seek to transfer skills to the executing agency by the end of the TA?	Yes		No	Do not know
	10a. If yes, how satisfactory was the approach to technology and skills transfer? <sup>1</sup>	Very satisfactory	Satisfactory	Not satisfactory	Do not know
	10b. If not satisfactory, please state in what way.				
11.	Did the senior management of the executing agency play a major role in the design of the TA?	Yes		No	Do not know



Technical Assistance Implementation					
12.	Were appropriate counterpart staff available to participate in the TA and benefit from it? <sup>2</sup>	No			Do not know
12a.	If yes, were the counterpart staff and trainees released as required without jeopardizing other high priorities of the executing agency?	No			Do not know
12b.	When were counterpart staff made available for the TA?	From the outset	Shortly after the beginning	Late in the project	Not at all
12c.	Was the counterpart approach to skills transfer effective?	Yes	No		Do not know
12d.	If no, please cite the major reasons.				
13.	Were recommendations made under the TA to improve the functioning of the executing agency?	Yes	No		Do not know
13a.	If yes, were the recommendations appropriate?	Yes	No		Do not know
13b.	If yes, were the recommendations accepted?	Yes	No		Do not know
13c.	If yes, how substantially were the recommendations acted upon?	Significantly	Partially		Not At All
14.	Did the TA do any staff training?	Yes	No		Do not know
14a.	If yes, approximately how many staff were planned to be trained and how many were actually trained?	Planned to be trained		Actually trained	
14b.	What level of long-term improvement in staff performance did the training produce?	Marked improvement	Some improvement	No improvement	Do not know
15.	Were the trainers	Very competent?	Competent?	Not very competent?	Do not know
16.	Was the training	Just long enough?	Slightly too short?	Too short?	Do not know
17.	At the end of the TA, how well could the counterparts and trainees, without further technical assistance, perform the tasks they were supposed to perform?	Very satisfactory	Satisfactory	Not satisfactory	Do not know
17a.	If not satisfactory, please cite the major reasons.				
18.	How satisfactorily was the TA's objective achieved?	Very satisfactory	Satisfactory	Not satisfactory	Do not know
18a.	Please identify one significant and enduring outcome directly resulting from the implementation of the TA's objective.				
19.	Did the senior management of the executing agency play a major role in the implementation and general guidance of the TA?	Yes	No		Do not know
19a.	If no, did the lack of involvement have an adverse effect on the outcomes of the TA?	Yes	No		Do not know
20.	Would the TA have been more effective if staff in central agencies had been more involved?	Yes	No		Do not know
20a.	If yes, please explain in what way.				
21.	Did women working in the executing agency benefit from the TA?	Yes	No		Do not know
21a.	If yes, please indicate approximately how many and in what way.				
22.	Please list the major problems with TA implementation. (See Annex for a sample of constraints and problems.)				
Performance of Consultants					
23.	Please rate the overall performance of the consultants.	Very satisfactory	Satisfactory	Not satisfactory	Do not know
23a.	In terms of technical competence.	Very satisfactory	Satisfactory	Not satisfactory	Do not know
23b.	In terms of training and skills transfer.	Very satisfactory	Satisfactory	Not satisfactory	Do not know
24.	How well did the consultants understand the needs of the executing agency?	Very well	Satisfactory	Not satisfactory	Do not know
25.	Please rate how well the consultants adapted their technical competencies to the needs and competencies of the executing agency.	Very satisfactory	Satisfactory	Not satisfactory	Do not know

26.	How culturally sensitive was the work of the consultants?	Very sensitive	Sensitive	Not sensitive	Do not know
27.	How well did the consultants understand the professional needs of the people working in the executing agency?	Very satisfactory	Satisfactory	Not satisfactory	Do not know
28.	Did the consultants pay any special attention to the needs of the women working in the executing agency?	Yes	No		Do not know
29.	Did the consultants	Help the executing agency to do things	Do things for the agency		Do not know
30.	Would you employ the consultants again?	Yes	No		Do not know
30a.	If no, please explain why.				
Institutional Development					
31.	Please rate the contribution of the TA in the improvement of the following:				
31a.	Management competencies of the executing agency (i.e., is the executing agency better managed as a result of the TA?)	Major	Minor	None at all	Do not know
31b.	Policy capacity of the executing agency	Major	Minor	None at all	Do not know
31c.	Operating systems of the executing agency (i.e., did the TA improve budget, planning, information systems, and procedures on a sustainable basis?)	Major	Minor	None at all	Do not know
31d.	Organizational efficiency of the executing agency (i.e., has productivity of the executing agency increased as a direct result of the TA?)	Major	Minor	None at all	Do not know
31e.	Technical competencies of staff working in the executing agency	Major	Minor	None at all	Do not know
31f.	Operational effectiveness of the executing agency (i.e., does the executing agency provide a better quality of service for the government?)	Major	Minor	None at all	Do not know
31g.	Planning, monitoring, and control of the executing agency	Major	Minor	None at all	Do not know
32.	Did the TA result in the development of any performance indicators?	Yes	No		Do not know
32a.	If yes, are those performance indicators still being used?	Yes	No		Do not know
32b.	If no, can you suggest performance indicators to assess the long-term effectiveness of the TA?				
32c.	Over time, has the performance rating on the basis of these indicators	Improved	Remained the same	Declined	Do not know
General					
33.	To achieve the best sustainable results for the executing agency, was the length of time for the TA	Just Right	Slightly too short	Far too short	Do not know
33a.	If too short, please explain why it was too short.				
34.	Do the majority of the counterparts still work in the executing agency?	Yes	No		Do not know
34a.	If no, do they still work in the public sector?	Yes	No		Do not know
34b.	If no, broadly, why did they leave the executing agency and the public sector?				
35.	Do the majority of trainees still work in the public sector?	Yes	No		Do not know
35a.	If no, broadly, why did they leave the executing agency and the public sector?				
36.	Have the facilities created under the TA continued to receive funding even after TA completion?	Yes	No		Do not know
37.	Did public service rules and procedures constrain the full effectiveness of the TA?	Yes	No		Do not know
37a.	If yes, please explain in what way.				



38.	Were there any incentives to encourage executing agency officers to participate in training provided under the TA?	Yes	No	Do not know	
38a.	If yes, please describe the incentives.				
39.	How could TA implementation be improved?				
40.	Would earlier reform of central agencies and their rules and procedures have improved the effectiveness of the TA?	Yes	No	Do not know	
40a.	If yes, please explain in what way.				
41.	Have the benefits of the TA been sustainable?	Yes	No	Do not know	
41a.	If no, please cite the major reasons.				
42.	Please rate the performance of the ADB in TA preparation, administration, and supervision.	Very satisfactory	Satisfactory	Not satisfactory	Do not know
42a.	If not satisfactory, please explain in what way.				
42b.	Please rate the ADB's responsiveness and flexibility.	Very satisfactory	Satisfactory	Not satisfactory	Do not know
42c.	If not satisfactory, please explain in what way.				
43.	In retrospect, please rate the long-term effectiveness of the TA on the executing agency.	Successful	Partly successful	Unsuccessful	Do not know

**Annex: Sample of Constraints and Problems in Implementation**

	Question 7b	Question 22
1.	Shortage of counterpart staff and trainees/staff had no time.	
2.	Lack of managerial skills/inadequate technical know-how.	
3.	Management/financial/organizational problems within the executing agency and within the government itself.	
4.	Sociopolitical/cultural/geographic and demographic factors.	
5.	Unclear or absent policy/legislation/guidelines/control mechanisms.	
6.	Inadequate database/inaccurate data generated/ineffective or poor management information system.	
7.	Lack of incentives, support services, infrastructure, and facilities.	
8.	Lack of coordination/communication/overlapping functions/ disputes among concerned implementing agencies/task network.	
9.	Lack of capital/funds/delay in release of government counterpart funds.	
10.	Delay in recruitment of consultants/poor performance of consultants.	
11.	Training	
11a.	Was too difficult or too short.	
11b.	Was not relevant to work/did not provide skills usable in the prevailing circumstances.	
11c.	Did not interest the trainees/did not offer incentives.	

Source: Adapted from ADB. 1996. *Special Study on Assessment of the Effectiveness of Bank Technical Assistance for Capacity Building in Indonesia*. Manila.

## FURTHER READING

ADB. 2005–2006. *Technical Assistance for Capacity Building of the Inland Fisheries Research and Development Institute II*. Manila. Available: [www.adb.org/documents/tars/cam/tar-cam-36634b.pdf](http://www.adb.org/documents/tars/cam/tar-cam-36634b.pdf)

Also view the questionnaire on effectiveness of ADB assistance in capacity building for *Capacity Building of the Inland Fisheries Research and Development Institute II*. Available: [www.adb.org/projects/tonle\\_sap/reports/tsri-09.pdf](http://www.adb.org/projects/tonle_sap/reports/tsri-09.pdf)

Also view the technical assistance completion report on *Capacity Building of the Inland Fisheries Research and Development Institute II*. Available: [www.adb.org/documents/tacrs/cam/36634-cam-tacr.pdf](http://www.adb.org/documents/tacrs/cam/36634-cam-tacr.pdf)  
 ———. 2008. *Getting Institutions Right*. Manila. Available: [www.adb.org/documents/evaluation/learning-curves/ses/lc-getting-institutions-right.pdf](http://www.adb.org/documents/evaluation/learning-curves/ses/lc-getting-institutions-right.pdf)



### KNOWLEDGE CAPTURE AND STORAGE

Knowledge leaks in various ways at various times.



# Conducting Exit Interviews

Exit interviews provide feedback on why employees leave, what they liked about their job, and where the organization needs improvement. They are most effective when data is compiled and tracked over time. The concept has been revisited as a tool to capture knowledge from leavers. Exit interviews can be a win-win situation: the organization retains a portion of the leaver's knowledge and shares it; the departing employee articulates unique contributions and leaves a mark.



## RATIONALE

Together with staff engagement surveys, exit interviews are one of the most widely used methods of gathering employee feedback. The less tacit and explicit knowledge an organization captures from staff on a regular basis, the more it needs to capture when they exit. Exit interviews are a unique chance to survey and analyze the opinions of departing employees, who are generally more forthcoming and objective on such occasions. From an employer's perspective, the purpose is to learn from the employee's departure on the basis that feedback is a helpful driver of organizational performance improvement.

More recently, the practice of exit interviews has been revisited as a knowledge management tool to capture and store knowledge from departing employees and minimize loss through staff turnover. This is especially relevant in roles where the employee embodies significant human capital that may be passed to appropriate employees remaining in the organization. Most departing employees are pleased to share knowledge, help a successor, or brief management, in so doing yield information that may be used to enhance all aspects of an organization's working environment including culture, management, business processes, and intra- as well as inter-organizational relationships. Notwithstanding, participation in exit interviews and responses to exit interview questionnaires must be voluntary.

## BENEFITS

At negligible cost, the benefits of learning-based exit interviews are that they

- Help retain vital knowledge in the organization.
- Shorten the learning curve of new employees or successors to the departing employee.
- Catalyze identification of specific mistakes and improvement opportunities.

- Enhance the understanding and experience that managers have of managing people and organizations.
- Inform management succession planning.
- Support an organization's human resource practices.
- Provide direct indications on how to improve staff retention.
- Generate useful information for training needs analysis and training planning processes.
- Result in the departing employee having a more positive view of the organization and its culture.

## PREPARATION

Face-to-face interactions are central to exit interviews. The management of the exit interview process must be initiated as early as possible after it is known that the employee is leaving. In preparation, it is important to

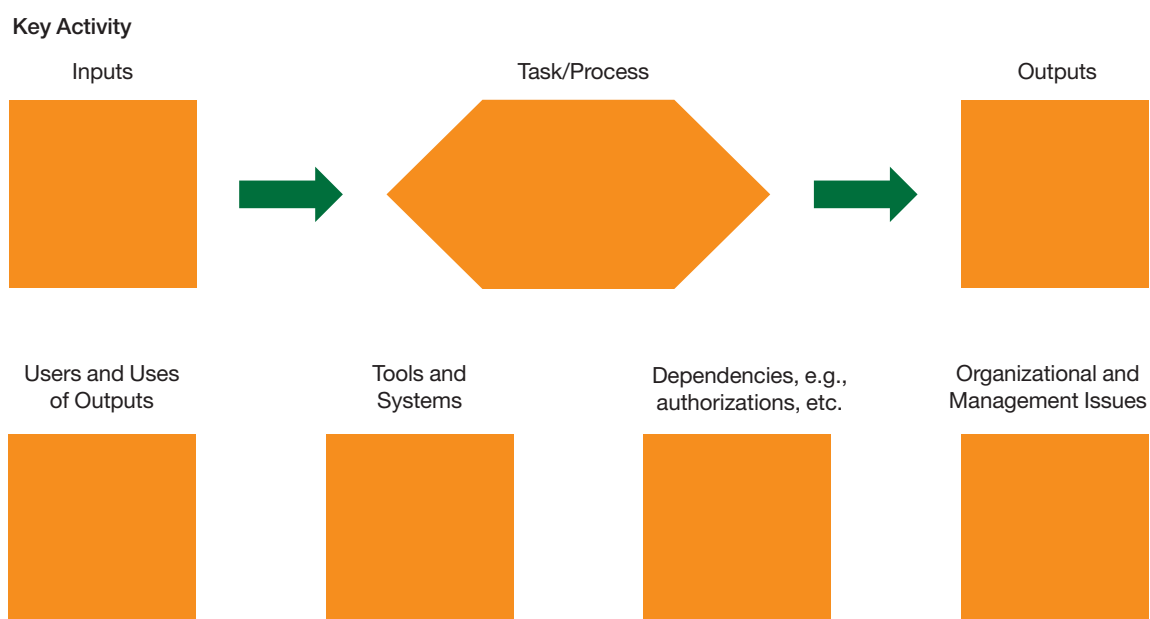
- Consider who currently accesses the departing employee's knowledge and what they need to know from the replacement staff. It is useful in this respect to think about documented explicit knowledge (in files, documents, and electronic mails) as well as tacit knowledge (know-how) that need to be explained.
- Develop a plan in a participatory way to ensure that knowledge can be captured and stored during the departing employee's notice period. This requires a review of key tasks, drawing from the original terms of reference of the departing employee. For explicit knowledge, the departing employee should move relevant files into shared folders or a document library. Ideally, they should organize all files and draw up a related set of notes for the successor. For important tacit knowledge, activity-based knowledge mapping could prove useful, providing a framework for conversations about how key activities are undertaken, what inputs and outputs are involved, or what obstacles and bottlenecks might exist. Internal and external networks and other sources of knowledge could also be discussed.

## LAST WORDS

The last words of departing employees can provide valuable insights into corporate culture, dysfunctions, and opportunities to do better. It is important to listen carefully during an exit

interview, track answers, and look for long-term trends. But it is even more important to act on the information received to correct mistakes or improve further in areas of success. ■

**Figure: Activity-Based Mapping Template**



Source: Author.



**Table: Exit Interview Questionnaire<sup>a</sup>**

Details (to be completed by the unit but checked by the departing employee)	
Name:	
Gender:	
Nationality:	
Position:	
Level:	
Type of contract:	
Start and Finish Date:	
What Next	
What are you going to do?	
If employment, who will be your new employer?	
If employment, what sort of job and at what level?	
If employment, what attracted you to your new job?	
If employment, how will your new job differ from your current one?	
About the Unit	
Do you feel the description of your job in the engagement process was accurate?	
Were the purpose and expected results of your position clear throughout your work in the unit?	
Could your qualifications, experience, and skills have been used to better advantage?	
Do you feel you received appropriate support to enable you to do your job?	
Was the training you received in the unit adequate to enable you to accomplish your job?	
Are there further training opportunities you think the unit should be offering?	
What did you see as your promotion and career prospects in the unit?	
How might those prospects have been improved?	
How was your working environment generally?	
Can you list the three most important things that should be done to make the unit more effective in terms of influencing decisions in the organization?	
Others	
Can you suggest ways to improve this questionnaire?	
<b>Signed:</b>	<b>Date:</b>

<sup>a</sup> Please return to the head of the unit (or office, division, or department as appropriate) with copy to designated supervising staff.

Source: Author.

## Box : Sample Exit Interview Questions

The following questions can be used in face-to-face exit interviews to complement or deepen, on a case-by-case basis, the responses made to the exit interview questionnaire.

### General

- What was satisfying during your time in the unit? What was frustrating?
- What could you have done better or more?
- What extra responsibility would you have welcomed?

### Induction

- Were you inducted adequately for your role(s)?
- What improvement could be made to the way you were inducted for your role(s)?

### Training and Development

- How well do think your training and development needs were assessed and met?
- What training and development did you find helpful and enjoyable?
- What training and development would you have liked or needed that you did not receive and what effect would that have had?

### Performance Evaluation

- What can you say about the way your performance was measured and the feedback on your performance results?
- How well do you think the performance and development plan worked for you?
- How would you have changed the expectations (or absence of) that were placed on you? And why?

### Communications

- What can you say about communications in the unit? How could these be improved?
- What could you say about communications between the unit and other departments and offices? How could these be improved?

### Working Conditions

- How would you describe the culture of the unit?
- What suggestion would you make to improve working conditions?
- What examples of inefficiencies in business processes and procedures in the unit could you point to?
- How could the unit reduce stress levels among employees where stress is an issue?

### Management

- What can you say about the way you were managed? On a day-to-day basis? On a month-to-month basis?
- What things did the unit and its management do to make your job more difficult?
- What would you say about how you were motivated and how could that have been improved?
- How could the unit have enabled you to have made better use of your time?

### Knowledge Transfer

- What would you consider to be your foremost knowledge assets?
- How might your explicit and tacit knowledge be transferred prior to your departure?
- Would you be happy to take part in a briefing meeting with managers, replacements, successor, and/or colleagues so that we can benefit further from your knowledge prior to your departure?
- What can the unit do to enable you to pass on as much of your knowledge as possible to your replacement or successor prior to your departure?
- How and when would you prefer to pass on your knowledge to your successor?
- Could you introduce (name of successor) to your key contacts before you go?
- How can the unit gather and make better use of the knowledge of employees?

Source: Author.



### KNOWLEDGE CAPTURE AND STORAGE

Knowledge leaks in various ways at various times.



# The Critical Incident Technique

Organizations are often challenged to identify and resolve workplace problems. The Critical Incident technique gives them a starting point and a process for advancing organizational development through learning experiences. It helps them study “what people do” in various situations.



## TALES OF THE UNEXPECTED

One might think there are no answers to the following questions: How fast can you think on your feet? How do you react in the face of the unexpected? How can you prepare if you cannot predict? And yet, there are.

Evidently, some behaviors contribute to the success or failure of individuals—and organizations—in specific situations. And so, responses to the unforeseen lie in identifying before the fact events or circumstances, or series of them, that are outside the range of ordinary human experiences.

The questions posed earlier are as old as mankind; but our ability to address them owes largely to the relatively recent work of John Flanagan.<sup>1</sup> These days critical incidents can be harvested to provide a rich, personal perspective of life that facilitates understanding of the issues and obstacles people face every now and then and illuminates avenues for improvement (or replication if outcomes are effective)—avenues that may not be apparent through purely quantitative methods of data collection. This should matter to high-performance organizations.

**“If history repeats itself, and the unexpected always happens, how incapable must Man be of learning from experience.”**

—George Bernard Shaw

## OF CRITICAL INCIDENTS, THEIR ANALYSIS ...

A critical incident<sup>2</sup> need not be spectacular: it suffices that it should hold significance. As such, at the individual level, it can be events or circumstances that made one stop and think, perhaps revisit one’s assumptions, or impacted one’s personal and professional learning. At the collective level, it can be a systemic problem from organizational maladaptation, or an issue arising from differences among stakeholders. In short, an incident may be defined as critical when the action(s) taken contributed to an effective or an ineffective outcome. At heart, all incidents pertain to matters such as culture, knowledge, competence, relationships, beliefs, emotions, communication, or treatment.

<sup>1</sup> John Flanagan (1906–1996), an American psychologist, devised aptitude tests for the selection of aircrews during the Second World War. To identify the skills service members needed, trainees and their observers were asked to recount incidents when a subject had succeeded or failed. John Flanagan’s team then characterized common threads in the aptitude, proficiency, and temperament underlying success or failure. After identifying the critical requirements of a good pilot, copilot, navigator, and bombardier, he formulated tests that looked for those qualities. John Flanagan later adapted the technique to education. He questioned high school students to discover what they liked, what they were able to do, and how much instruction and career counseling they were receiving. Follow-up research 1 year, 5 years, and 11 years after their graduation revealed that schools had frustrated some of the best students. John Flanagan then framed systems for individualized study plans. The Critical Incident technique has since then been used in management—more specifically human resource management, for example, to establish performance requirements for positions; customer service; education; health; information systems development; operation of complex devices; surgery; and industry.

<sup>2</sup> An incident is an occurrence or condition, contingent on or related to something else, that interrupts normal procedure.

**“To expect the unexpected shows a thoroughly modern intellect.”**

—Oscar Wilde

Relaxing eligibility criteria lets stakeholders select incidents for a range of purposes (by and large categorized under planning and exploration, evaluation, and empowerment and animation). This is assuredly what John Flanagan must have intended: in his seminal article,<sup>3</sup> written 10 years after the Second World War, he described the Critical Incident technique as “a set of procedures for collecting direct observations of human behavior in such a way as to facilitate their potential usefulness in solving practical problems and developing broad psychological principles.” To wit, the technique seeks, largely through qualitative processes of exploration and investigation, to identify actions associated with effective or acceptable performance in defined situations.<sup>4</sup> Hence, the analysis of a critical incident describes the setting in which an incident occurred, the behavior (including the attitudes, emotions, skills, knowledge, and resources) of the people involved, and the outcome or result of the behavior. The analysis brings cognitive, affective, and behavioral dimensions together, touching both the content of what is learned and the process of learning.

### ... AND THE OUTLINE OF A PROCESS TO MAP THEM<sup>5</sup>

When analyzing a critical incident, reflective individuals ask: Why did I view the original situation in that way? What assumptions about it did I make? How else could I have interpreted it? What other action(s) might I have taken that could have been more helpful? What will I do if I am faced again with a similar situation?

Organizations find this much more difficult to do, the degree of complication depending on their type, e.g., entrepreneurial, machine, diversified, professional, innovative, missionary, or political. Fortunately, the Critical Incident technique structures such queries with a versatile, open-ended method of data collection for improving organizational performance that can be

applied effectively in varied situations. This makes it a much-awaited addition to organizational tool kits. (David Kolb’s learning cycle,<sup>6</sup> which emerged later, is reminiscent of it.) Additionally, by managing the issue internally, organizations are given the opportunity to collaboratively resolve problems without all-too-frequent reliance on consultants.<sup>7</sup>

Under the technique, critical incidents are generated by asking individuals, usually subject matter experts, to describe through interviews<sup>8</sup> incidents they (or someone else) handled well or poorly. (Where the critical incident is a spectacular success, the Critical Incident technique complements the process of appreciative inquiry. However, organizations tend to ignore great achievements, in a technical sense; this means that the technique’s value is more commonly seen to lie in helping them fix problems and eradicate causes of failure.)

**Figure 1: Learning by Doing**



Source: Graham Gibbs. 1988. *Learning by Doing: A Guide to Teaching and Learning Methods*. Oxford.

<sup>3</sup> John Flanagan. 1954. The Critical Incident Technique. *Psychological Bulletin*. 51 (4). pp. 327–358.

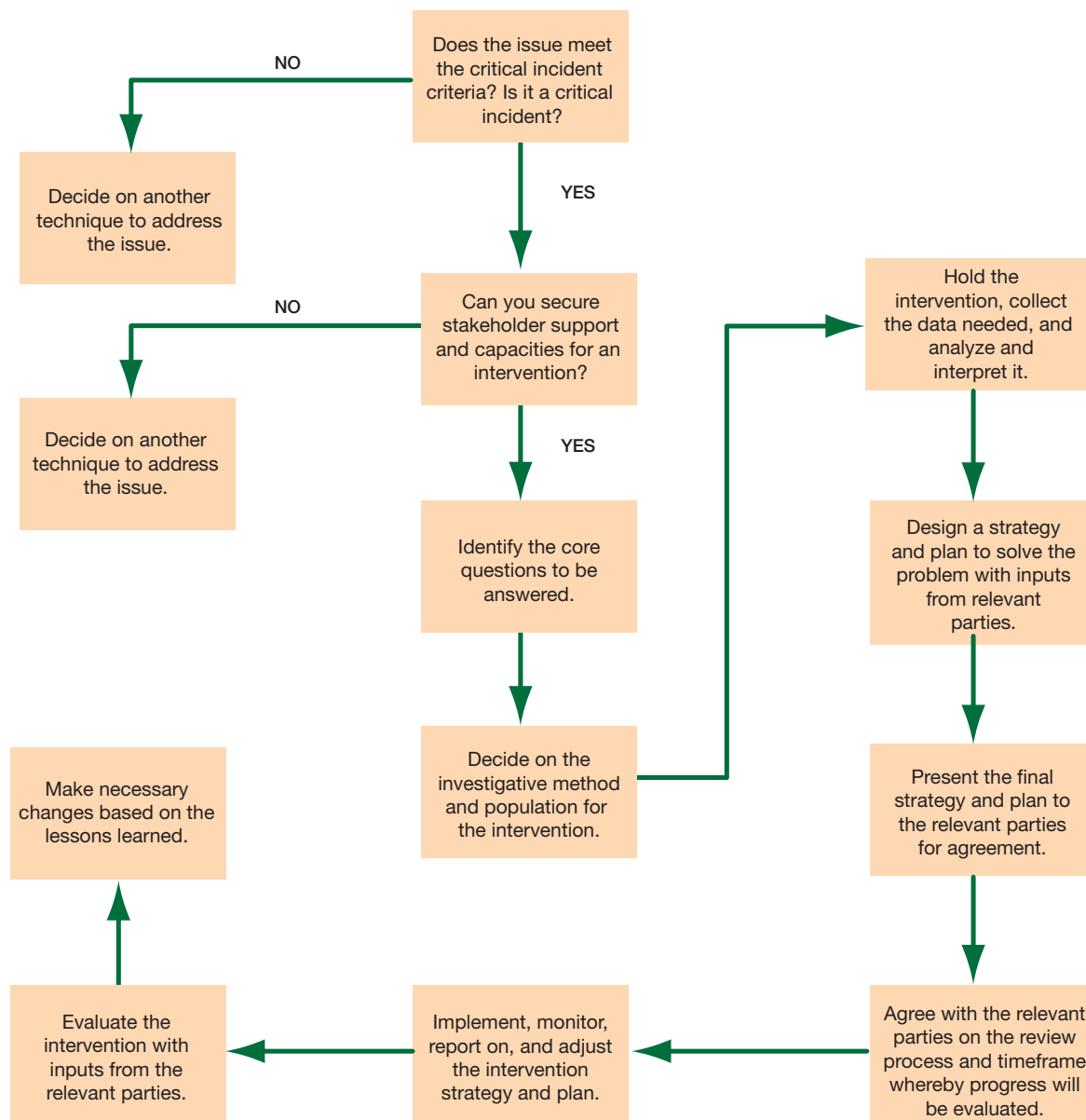
<sup>4</sup> Critical incidents can thereby be used to identify the learning needs of personnel.

<sup>5</sup> The versatility of the Critical Incident technique is demonstrated by the variety of its possible applications across the sectors, professions, and disciplines in which it has found favor. They include, for instance, observing effective or ineffective ways of doing something; identifying conducive or limiting factors; collecting behavioral descriptions of problems; and determining functional characteristics that are critical to certain aspects of a situation. Hence, the technique should be applied through flexible steps: it cannot follow a single, rigid set of rules.

<sup>6</sup> David Kolb. 1984. *Experiential Learning: Experience as the Source of Learning and Development*. Prentice Hall.

<sup>7</sup> The rationale for not relying too much on consulting services is well argued in Geoff Parcell and Chris Collison. 2009. *No More Consultants: We Know More Than We Think*. John Wiley & Sons. Without straying from the topic of these *Knowledge Solutions*, in keeping with their focus on reflective practice, it is instructive to ponder the five key questions Geoff Parcell and Chris Collison invite an organization to pose: Can we identify the issue? Do we know our internal capability? Does anyone do this well internally? Do we know who is good at it externally? Having identified who does it well, are they available to help us, either by sharing what they know or by implementing it? Their book then marks out a workable framework for an organization to ascertain when and why it should rely on the expertise and experience of its own people. (Regrettably, the authors make no reference to the Critical Incident technique.)

<sup>8</sup> To clarify, information about critical incidents in an organization can be collected through numerous vehicles other than interviews. They include focus groups, surveys, performance records, and work diaries. In focus groups, a facilitator leads a small number of people to identify and describe in structured discussion specific examples of, say, past performance. Surveys can be administered in print or online. (The individuals completing the surveys may be assembled in a room, or may complete the survey on their own.) Examination of performance records might, for example, focus on leadership and personnel satisfaction. Another method of investigation is work diaries that can be drawn to record incidents of successes or failures as they occur during the working day or working week.

**Figure 2: A Process Map for Critical Incident Technique Interventions**

Source: Adapted from Paul Davis. 2006. Critical Incident Technique: A Learning Intervention for Organizational Problem Solving. *Development and Learning in Organizations*. 20 (2). pp. 13–16.

To kick off a Critical Incident technique intervention, it is essential to agree on whether the issue meets established critical incident criteria and then prepare a clear, concise statement of the purpose of the intervention.<sup>9</sup> (Obviously, the amplitude of consequences should define criticality.) If the issue meets the criteria, can the agency secure stakeholder support and capacities for an intervention? Next, one must understand what core questions need to be addressed,<sup>10</sup> especially as this helps prioritize the intervention and its expected impact against other priorities. Specifically,

- What were the events or circumstances that led to the critical incident?
- What were the behaviors of the agents that made these (events or circumstances) a critical incident?
- What were the outcomes of the critical incident?
- What are the possible future outcomes if behaviors remain unchanged?
- What are the possible future outcomes if behaviors change based on lessons learned?

One should then decide on the investigative method and the population to be tapped in the context of the intervention. The subsequent steps rest on more familiar tools, methods, and approaches for project management, entailing as they do actual collection and analysis of data; the design and review of strategies and plans for problem solving; implementation and monitoring; evaluation; and requisite adjustments.<sup>11</sup>

## ADVANTAGES AND LIMITATIONS

The Critical Incident technique shows promise, but is still establishing itself as a qualitative research tool. Since it focuses on behavior, it can be leveraged in numerous events or circumstances as long as the inherent bias of retrospective judgment is understood. Some advantages are the following:

- The Critical Incident technique helps identify and analyze rare events or circumstances that might not be picked up by methods of investigation dealing with everyday episodes. Its focus on critical issues can bring major benefits.
- The Critical Incident technique maximizes the positive and minimizes the negative attributes of anecdotes, turning complex experiences into rich data and information. Most people enjoy telling stories: they like to be listened to and are glad that their experiences are thought important. Especially when data and information are collected anonymously, investigators can obtain deep information about the emotions, feelings, and actions of individuals, and find new meaning. (As you would expect, the technique is

**“If you do not expect the unexpected, you will not find it; for it is hard to be sought out, and difficult.”**

—Heraclitus

therefore especially useful where hazard, security, or privacy confuse a situation.)

- Critical incidents provide dramatic demonstrations of the impact of behavior, whose cause and severity may not have been known. With real life examples, they tell the human story behind action(s) and their outcomes and spark interest in associated reports and presentations.
- Critical incidents help gauge abstract constructs such as motivation through their demonstration in reported behavior. (These are more difficult to assess with other tools, methods, and approaches.)
- Critical incidents provide in-depth information at a much lower cost and with much greater ease than observation. Some limitations are the following:
- Critical incidents cast a personal perspective on organizational issues. (Reports of behavior are filtered through the lens of individual perceptions, memory, honesty, and bias: for that reason, they may not be entirely accurate.) Therefore, the Critical Incident technique may need to be combined with other methods of data collection, analysis, and interpretation before an organization can obtain a comprehensive understanding of a situation.
- Similarly, it cannot be assumed that people can and will provide incidents that are critical to success in their particular jobs—hence the need to select critical incidents carefully—nor that qualitative analysis alone is enough to clearly identify the aptitudes, proficiencies, and temperaments underlying success or failure.
- Some applications of the Critical Incident technique take time: investigation of data and information can be laborious.
- It may not be easy to convince people to share critical incidents if the investigative approach requires them to write their own stories. ■

## FURTHER READING

Raphaela Hettlage and Marc Steinlin. 2006. *The Critical Incident Technique in Knowledge Management-Related Contexts*. Swiss Association for International Cooperation. Available: [www.i-p-k.ch/files/CriticalIncidentTechnique\\_in\\_KM.pdf](http://www.i-p-k.ch/files/CriticalIncidentTechnique_in_KM.pdf)

<sup>9</sup> This may require that guidelines for selecting, observing, interpreting, and classifying critical incidents be drawn beforehand.

<sup>10</sup> People are more likely to give candid accounts of their experiences if they are assured of anonymity. This is especially important if they belong to communities that share strong bonds.

<sup>11</sup> For a methodological guide on key steps of the Critical Incident technique, see Raphaela Hettlage and Marc Steinlin. 2006. *The Critical Incident Technique in Knowledge Management-Related Contexts*. Swiss Association for International Cooperation. Available: [www.i-p-k.ch/files/CriticalIncidentTechnique\\_in\\_KM.pdf](http://www.i-p-k.ch/files/CriticalIncidentTechnique_in_KM.pdf)



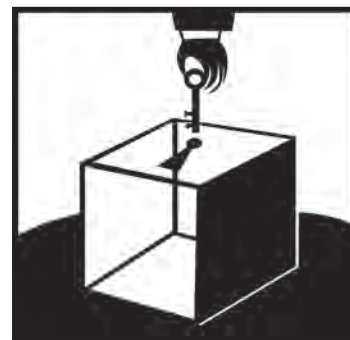
### KNOWLEDGE CAPTURE AND STORAGE

Knowledge leaks in various ways at various times.



# Glossary of Knowledge Management

The knowledge management discipline can be cryptic. These *Knowledge Solutions* define its most common concepts in simple terms.



## COMMUNITIES OF PRACTICE

Networks of people who work on similar processes or in similar disciplines and who come together to develop and share their knowledge in that field for the benefit of both themselves and their organization. Communities of practice may be created formally or informally, and members can interact online or in person.

## CORE KNOWLEDGE ACTIVITIES

Knowledge activities that have been identified as most widely used by an organization, often also called the knowledge life cycle or the knowledge value chain. They are to identify, create, store, share, and use knowledge, often in a two-way exchange. Two important requirements have to be fulfilled to achieve improvements from these activities: (i) the activities should be aligned or integrated into business processes; and (ii) the activities should be balanced in accordance with the specificities of each process and organization. A knowledge management solution should not focus only on one or two activities in isolation.

## DATA

Discrete and objective facts, measurements, or observations that can be analyzed to generate information.

## EXPLICIT KNOWLEDGE

Knowledge that can be codified in formal, systematic language and shared in discussion or writing. Examples include a telephone directory, an instruction manual, or a report of research findings.

## INFORMATION

Data that have been categorized, analyzed, summarized, and placed in context in a form that has structure and meaning.

## INFORMATION MANAGEMENT

The management of an organization's information resources to improve performance. Information management underpins knowledge management, as people derive knowledge from information.

## INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

A term encompassing the physical elements of computing—including servers, networks, and desktop computing—that enable digital information to be identified, created, stored, shared, and used.

## INTELLECTUAL CAPITAL

The value, or potential value, of an organization's intellectual assets (or knowledge products and services). Attempts to place a financial value on knowledge often define intellectual capital as the combination of human, structural, and technological capital.

## KNOW-HOW

Skill or capability derived from knowledge and experience.

## KNOWLEDGE

A combination of data and information, to which is added expert opinion, skills, and experience, resulting in a valuable asset that aids decision making. In organizational terms, knowledge is generally thought of as being know-how, applied information, information with judgment, or the capacity for effective action. Knowledge may be tacit, explicit, individual, and/or collective. It is intrinsically linked to people.

## KNOWLEDGE ASSETS

The parts of an organization's intangible assets that relate specifically to knowledge, such as know-how, good practices, and intellectual property. Knowledge assets (or products and



services) are categorized as human (people, teams, networks, and communities), structural (the codified knowledge that can be found in business processes), and technological (the technologies that support knowledge sharing, such as databases and intranets). By understanding the knowledge assets it possesses, an organization can use them to better effect and identify what gaps may exist.

### **KNOWLEDGE AUDIT**

Systematic identification and analysis of an organization's knowledge needs, resources, flows, gaps, uses, and users. A knowledge audit usually includes a review of people-based knowledge, capability, and skills, as well as information. It also examines critically an organization's values, vision, culture, and skills from the perspective of its knowledge needs.

### **KNOWLEDGE BASE**

An organized structure that facilitates the storage of data, information, and knowledge to be retrieved in support of a knowledge management process.

### **KNOWLEDGE ECONOMY**

An economy in which knowledge plays a dominant part in the creation of wealth. The four pillars of a knowledge economy framework are: (i) an economic incentive and institutional regime that provides good economic policies and institutions that permit efficient mobilization and allocation of resources and stimulate creativity and incentives for the efficient creation, dissemination, and use of existing knowledge; (ii) educated and skilled workers who can continuously upgrade and adapt their skills to efficiently create and use knowledge; (iii) an effective innovation system of firms, research centers, universities, consultants, and other organizations that can keep up with the knowledge revolution and tap into the growing stock of global knowledge and assimilate and adapt it to local needs; and (iv) a modern and adequate information infrastructure that can facilitate the effective communication, dissemination, and processing of information and knowledge.

### **KNOWLEDGE FLOWS**

The ways in which knowledge moves around, and into and out of, an organization.

### **KNOWLEDGE HARVESTING**

A set of methods and techniques for making tacit knowledge more explicit so that it can be shared more easily.

### **KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT**

The explicit and systematic management of processes enabling vital individual and collective knowledge resources to be identified, created, stored, shared, and used for benefit. Its practical expression is the fusion of information management and organizational learning.

### **KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT TOOLS**

The methods and techniques that are used to support or deliver practical knowledge management. These can be either information technology systems, e.g., databases, intranets, extranets, and portals; methodologies; or human networks, e.g., communities of practice.

### **KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT STRATEGY**

A detailed plan that outlines how an organization intends to implement knowledge management principles and practices to achieve organizational objectives.

### **KNOWLEDGE MANAGER**

A role with operational and developmental responsibility for implementing and reinforcing knowledge management principles and practices. Often acts as central owner of taxonomies and content standards and knowledge processes. Works to promote access to information, intelligence support, expertise, and good practices.

### **KNOWLEDGE WORKER**

A staff member whose role relies on his or her ability to find, synthesize, communicate, and apply knowledge.

### **LEARNING ORGANIZATION**

An organization skilled at identifying, creating, storing, sharing, and using knowledge, and then modifying its behavior to reflect new knowledge.

### **LESSONS LEARNED**

Concise descriptions of knowledge derived from experience that can be communicated through methods and techniques, such as storytelling and debriefing or summarized in databases. These lessons often reflect on what was done right, what one might do differently, and how one might improve processes to be more effective in the future.

### **MENTORING**

A one-to-one learning relationship in which a senior staff member of an organization is assigned to support the development of a newer or more junior staff member by sharing his or her knowledge and wisdom.

### **ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE**

The specific collection of values and norms shared by individuals and groups in an organization that controls the way they interact with one another and with people outside the organization.

### **STORYTELLING**

The use of stories as a way of sharing knowledge and helping learning in an organization. Stories can describe complicated issues, explain events, communicate lessons, and/or bring about cultural change.



## TACIT KNOWLEDGE

The personalized knowledge that people carry in their heads. Tacit knowledge is more difficult to formalize and communicate than explicit knowledge. It can be shared through discussion, storytelling, and personal interactions. There are two dimensions to tacit knowledge: (i) a technical dimension, which encompasses the kind of informal personal skills or crafts often referred to as know-how; and (ii) a cognitive dimension, which consists of beliefs, ideals, values, schemata, and mental models that are ingrained in individuals and often taken for granted. ■

## FURTHER READING

ADB. 2007. *Learning Lessons in ADB*. Manila. Available: [www.adb.org/documents/reports/learning-lessons-adb/strategic-framework-2007-2009.asp](http://www.adb.org/documents/reports/learning-lessons-adb/strategic-framework-2007-2009.asp)  
———. 2008. *Auditing the Lessons Architecture*. Manila. Available: [www.adb.org/documents/studies/auditing-lessons-architecture/in371-07.asp](http://www.adb.org/documents/studies/auditing-lessons-architecture/in371-07.asp)





# Harvesting Knowledge

If 80% of knowledge is unwritten and largely unspoken, we first need to elicit that before we can articulate, share, and make wider use of it. Knowledge harvesting is one way to draw out and package tacit knowledge to help others adapt, personalize, and apply it; build organizational capacity; and preserve institutional memory.



## THE KNOW-DO GAP

The so-called know-do gap is one outcome of poor knowledge translation<sup>1</sup> and organizational forgetting. In decreasing order of incidence, that is commonly attributed to (i) shortage of resources, e.g., skills, time, and finance; (ii) lack of buy-in at all levels within and across organizations; and (iii) information overload. Shortage of resources affects policy makers, researchers, and practitioners equally. Practitioners commonly think insufficient buy-in to be the greatest challenge.

Except when messages are complex, the three most desirable knowledge translation strategies advocated in response are stakeholder engagement, dedicated knowledge brokers, and effective communications (with commensurate recognition, support, and funding in all three cases). Sure enough, the “wisdom of the crowd” element in these responses emphasizes

the importance of paying due attention to the “who,” “what,” and “how” of knowledge translation.

It is indeed vital to get the right knowledge to the right people at the right time, and help them apply it, if we are to do something better every time we do it again.<sup>2</sup> However, if 80% of knowledge resides in the minds of people, both as a thing and as a flow, it is now recognized, we first need to elicit that before we can articulate, share, and make use of it.<sup>3</sup> (Certainly, in most fields of human endeavor, current levels of explicit knowledge only reveal a fraction of what must be known to produce results.)<sup>4</sup>

In the 21st century, intra-organizational flows of knowledge have become as important as the resource itself.<sup>5</sup> And so, managing both stocks and flows has become an imperative rather than an alternative for most organizations. Knowledge harvesting is a means<sup>6</sup> to draw out, express, and package tacit

<sup>1</sup> Knowledge translation is emerging as a paradigm to learn and act to close the know-do gap. It has been characterized as the synthesis, exchange, and application of knowledge.

<sup>2</sup> Little used databases of “lessons learned” from self- and independent evaluations are all-too-familiar artifacts of failed approaches.

<sup>3</sup> Michael Polanyi (1891–1976), a Hungarian–British polymath whose work spanned physical chemistry, economics, and philosophy, held that all knowledge is either tacit or rooted in tacit knowledge. Using a mutually agreed language, much (but probably not all) can be communicated between individuals (even though we can never quite know what is implied by what we say because of the tacit nature of meaning). However, paraphrasing David Snowden, we can probably convey more by storytelling than we can write. (This probably explains why apprenticeship was the dominant form of knowledge transfer until it succumbed to scientific management and other instruments of modernity.) See David Snowden. 2002. Complex Acts of Knowing: Paradox and Descriptive Self-Awareness. *Journal of Knowledge Management*. 6 (2). pp. 100–111. From there, the following types of knowledge emerge: (i) knowledge that cannot be communicated; (ii) knowledge that can be communicated but cannot be expressed in documents; and (iii) knowledge that can be made explicit and shared through written language, often embedded in documents.

<sup>4</sup> Even then, the documents available on servers are not necessarily being exploited to potential. Most of us are merely more knowledgeable about their existence. Technologies remain to be developed and deployed, and much associated work conducted, before we can profit fully from the knowledge contained in such records. For instance, even simple memoranda contain valuable information such as tribal knowledge in a small group, opinions, and decision drivers. Yet, such knowledge is not codified. Where metadata has been inserted—incredibly, a rare occurrence—there are no set standards: it is therefore difficult to satisfy a particular query. Still, XML (Extensible Markup Language) topic maps, intended to convey knowledge of sets of resources, promise much. Three building blocks of topics, associations, and occurrences can be superimposed over the documents to describe them and enable that knowledge to be managed separately from what the documents describe.

<sup>5</sup> Until the mid-1990s, knowledge management was synonymous with process reengineering and underpinned by the computerization of business applications. Thereafter, excessive distinction between the tacit and explicit nature of knowledge encouraged useful but limiting attempts to build stocks. (The fabrication of repositories—platforms containing sets of guidance or support information—was integral to this.) The accent is now put on content, narrative, and context management to encourage the emergence of new meaning through the interactions of the formal and informal. Notions of complexity offer a wealth of insights and guidance with which to do so.

<sup>6</sup> Other techniques for knowledge capture and storage before, during, or after include peer assists, after-action reviews and retrospects, storytelling, staff profile pages, and exit interviews. (This said, knowledge harvesting is less about capture and decidedly much more about connection and conversation.)



knowledge to help others adapt, personalize, and apply it; build organizational capacity; and preserve institutional memory.<sup>7</sup> In addition to context and complexity, the concepts that relate to it are tacit knowledge stocks, tacit knowledge flows, and enablers and inhibitors of tacit knowledge work.<sup>8</sup>

### HARVESTING KNOWLEDGE...

Knowledge harvesting is not a catch-all solution. It hinges on trust and that is engendered by shared context.<sup>9</sup> It cannot succeed in adversarial environments, where potential knowledge contributors think they will jeopardize their status or job security if they share their know-how. However, in learning organizations, it can be leveraged judiciously to codify some human expertise in such ways that others can make use of it, for instance during staff induction or through learning and development programs, good practices, and how-to guides.<sup>10</sup> Numerous benefits can flow from enabling the movement of knowledge stocks between entities: (i) the knowledge of individuals (but also groups) is made available to who might need it independently of human memory, (ii) a wide range of solutions to organizational issues is produced, (iii) the ability to manage change is increased, (iv) the likelihood of repeated mistakes is reduced, (v) the learning curve of new personnel is shortened, (vi) precious knowledge is not lost when personnel leaves, and (vii) the tangible knowledge assets of the organization can be increased to create organizational value.

With care, knowledge harvesting can be applied to any field of human activity. In organizations, ready opportunities lie in operations, products, services, strategies, and even management. In association with other techniques for knowledge capture and storage, it might one day inform organization-wide Total Quality Management systems that deliberately elicit, organize, package, and share know-how. Several intra-organizational factors drive its design: the principal are (i) tacit knowledge enablers and inhibitors, (ii) the criticality of the knowledge to the organization, (iii) the need for immediate transfer, (iv) the complexity of the knowledge topic, (v) the qualities of knowledge contributors, (vi) the characteristics of knowledge

**“If nature has made any one thing less susceptible than all others of exclusive property, it is the action of the thinking power called an idea, which an individual may exclusively possess as long as he keeps it to himself; but the moment it is divulged, it forces itself into the possession of every one, and the receiver cannot dispossess himself of it. Its peculiar character, too, is that no one possesses the less, because every other possesses the whole of it. He who receives an idea from me, receives instruction himself without lessening mine; as he who lights his taper at mine, receives light without darkening me.”**

—Thomas Jefferson

seekers, (vii) the dispersion of knowledge contributors and knowledge seekers, (viii) the type of facilitation required, and (ix) the need for external review and validation.<sup>11</sup>

### ... IN STEPS

Approaches to knowledge harvesting typically follow seven steps, the intricacies and resource requirements of which necessarily depend on the object and scale of the exercise:

- **Focus.** It is impossible to collect and transmit everything that individuals know. An organization should determine what critical knowledge it wishes to connect more intimately with, and be clear about the benefits from that. Where does it expend the bulk of its resources? What does it need to do better or continue doing well to accomplish its objectives? What role does tacit knowledge play in helping it achieve that? It is crucial to focus: only individuals who are likely to contribute critical knowledge that can be profitably transferred can justify the investment of time and talent that knowledge harvesting requires. Obviously, an inseparable issue relates to the knowledge seekers: who are they, what are their specific needs, and how will they use the information generated? The organization can then harvest mindfully, with reuse and learning and development in sight.

<sup>7</sup> Institutional memory is the interrelated framework of an organization's concepts, rationales, policies, procedures, experiences, decisions, know-how, good practices, and facts that exists independently of the tenure of the individuals who contribute to it. Organizational forgetting is accidental but can also be purposeful. By accident, the dominant mode of organizational forgetting, new knowledge can fail to consolidate and thereby dissipates while established knowledge is not maintained and degrades. But innovations can also be abandoned or suspended on purpose while established knowledge may be purged under managed unlearning. Much as knowledge, organizational forgetting is context-dependent.

<sup>8</sup> Tacit knowledge enablers and inhibitors include an organization's culture, policies, structures, processes, technologies, working arrangements, and activities, not forgetting individuals, that can potentially influence knowledge flows and consequently impact knowledge stocks.

<sup>9</sup> Knowledge is the emergent, transient, active process of experiencing, often in communities. Accordingly, knowledge harvesting stands to thrive in communities of practice that encourage informal and social learning, where narrative is primordial.

<sup>10</sup> Expert systems, that is, software that attempts to provide an answer to a problem or clarify uncertainties where normally one or more human experts would need to be consulted, were quickly proposed as tools with which to harvest knowledge. The experience has not been fully satisfactory. Expert systems require well-bounded, static domains and do not easily incorporate learning: they are most useful in narrow problem domains.

<sup>11</sup> High-performance organizations harness the intellectual capital of retirees. They enable them to deploy needed skills and experience on specific projects or programs, mentor junior personnel, and participate in storytelling and learning and development activities. In the same spirit, they can also help review and validate harvested knowledge.

- **Find.** Next, the organization should locate the critical positions where knowledge harvesting stands to generate most benefits, or where knowledge loss is the greatest threat, and identify and prioritize the specific know-how at risk. (Logically, this also calls for an examination of existing, useful documents.) Planning at this stage relates to identification and logistics. First, it should be understood that the holders of the critical knowledge are not necessarily the most senior. Second, some effort should be devoted to circumscribing their qualities and identifying gaps and overlaps with the knowledge of others. Relevant biodata information can be collated including languages and degrees of proficiency, education and training, countries of work experience, job descriptions, roles and responsibilities, details of work experience, etc.
- **Elicit.** To elicit is to generate, obtain, or provoke a response or answer. Here, this entails effectively guiding a person through the process of expressing what he or she feels or knows about a particular topic or theme, preferably using one-on-one, face-to-face interviews supported by video and audio recording.<sup>12</sup> (In addition, transcribing the audio into text will enable tagging, distillation, and conversion to other formats, to name a few possible enhancements that will make the information more visible to and accessible by others.) Interviews can be structured, semi-structured, or (preferably) unstructured.<sup>13</sup> They must be well-prepared. The lists of questions or topic and thematic guides developed should be shared in advance, aiming to provoke reflection and draw out details. Effective harvesting persuades participants to speak concretely, shun blame, temper judgment, and anchor assumptions in shared meaning. Some advocate a process under which the knowledge harvester conducts a preliminary interview with knowledge contributors, and then presents the results to representatives of the knowledge seekers. Gaps in what the latter need to know or in their understanding of what has been communicated can then inform a second interview. (Knowledge seekers have a natural, vested interest in the outcome of interviews and, presumably, a clear and practical understanding of what they want to know.) Cycling between knowledge contributors and seekers can promote a good fit between what is desired and what is imparted, propitious also to later brokering by the knowledge seekers. Of course, effective knowledge harvesters are a key to success: they must have strong communication, interpersonal, and interviewing skills coupled with high emotional intelligence.
- **Organize.** The knowledge elicited must be examined for sense, recurrent patterns, as well as gaps and inconsistencies, and then arranged in coherent and systematic forms for ease of access. By and large, the materials can be ordered and structured into logical groups comprising signals that provide context, guidance that enhances action, and support information that develops understanding.
- **Package.** After they have been organized, insights must be packaged into deliverable knowledge assets and made available through media that are tightly integrated with the original purpose of knowledge harvesting. Again, it is essential to consider knowledge seekers and their needs. What formats will best serve them? For effect, this stage must include individuals from other functions and disciplines, including methodology keepers, learning and development specialists, and marketing experts. The miscellaneous outcomes may include manuals, checklists, guidelines, collections of reminiscences on topics and themes,<sup>14</sup> films, etc.
- **Evaluate.** Based on feedback from knowledge seekers, and further enrichment from continual harvesting, the relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, sustainability, and impact of outreach should be monitored and evaluated. Organizations should also consider the value of know-how over time: knowledge that is codified in static documents can quickly date.
- **Adapt.** To adapt means to make fit for, or change to suit, a new purpose. As knowledge assets are shared and applied, new requirements will inevitably emerge. Organizations must facilitate, empower, and document instances of learning so that critical knowledge assets incessantly evolve. ■

<sup>12</sup> Other methods exist, including laddering and concept mapping, process modeling, commentating, observation, constrained tasks, concept sorting, and repertory grids. Like expert systems, however, these are bounded in ways that constrain learning.

<sup>13</sup> In structured interviews, questions are preset, ordered, and closed, and enable replication with other knowledge contributors. The questions (and responses) can be coded to collect quantitative data. In semi-structured interviews, harvesters also use preset questions but can make spontaneous investigations. Quantitative data can still be collected and some coding used. In unstructured interviews, harvesters do not use preset questions but must still have a topic and some idea of the depth of information needed. Unstructured interviews allow harvesters to be responsive to the knowledge contributor and are probably better instruments to deal with multiple simple, complicated, complex, and chaotic contexts, all of which are apt to provoke emotions. (Knowledge harvesting is not so much about what the knowledge harvester wants to hear but rather what the knowledge contributor thinks is important for others to know.) However, the harvester's control of the process can be limited, the data produced is qualitative and therefore more difficult to cross-reference, and interviews can take time. There is also potential for interviewer bias.

<sup>14</sup> Stories are a good vehicle for capturing and storing tacit knowledge. An organizational story is a detailed narrative of management actions, personnel interactions, and significant intra-organizational events that are communicated informally in an organization. It provides very rich cultural context, so that the story remains in the conscious memory longer and leaves more trace. Organizational stories impart common values and rule sets and boost organizational learning.



## FURTHER READING

- ADB. 2010a. *ADB: Reflections and Beyond*. Manila. Available: [www.adb.org/documents/books/adb-reflections-and-beyond/default.asp](http://www.adb.org/documents/books/adb-reflections-and-beyond/default.asp)
- . 2010b. *Beyond: Stories and Sounds from ADB's Region*. Manila. Available: [www.adb.org/documents/multimedia/beyond-stories-sounds-from-adb/default.asp](http://www.adb.org/documents/multimedia/beyond-stories-sounds-from-adb/default.asp)





# Monthly Progress Notes

Feedback is the dynamic process of presenting and disseminating information to improve performance. Feedback mechanisms are increasingly recognized as key elements of learning before, during, and after. Monthly progress notes on project administration, which document accomplishments as well as bottlenecks, are prominent among these.



## RATIONALE

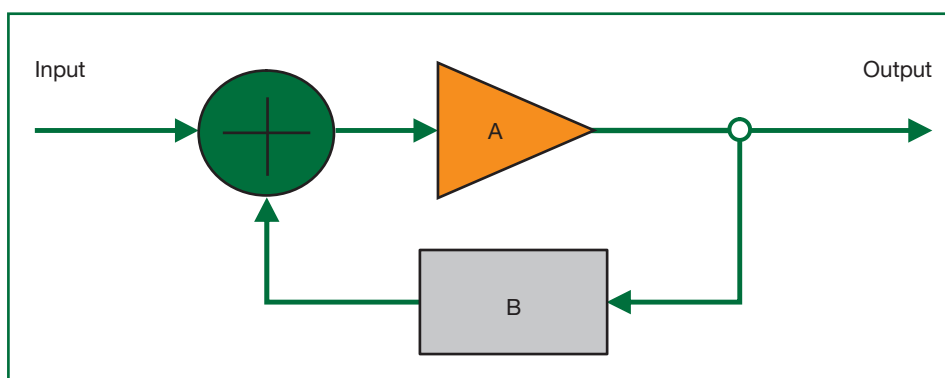
Feedback is a circular causal process whereby some portion of a system's output is returned to the input to control the dynamic behavior of the system. In organizations, feedback is the process of sharing observations, concerns, and suggestions to improve performance. In work that seeks to address the increasingly complex challenges of development, often with limited resources, feedback is essential to maximize development impact.<sup>1</sup> Examples of feedback include audits, performance

appraisals, monitoring and evaluation, shareholders' meetings, surveys, and 360-degree assessments.

## MONITORING AND EVALUATION

The essential first steps of feedback are the processes of monitoring and evaluation. Monitoring<sup>2</sup> provides senior management with information about current and emerging problems and data to assess if objectives are being met and remain valid. Monitoring reports should be based on a set of

**Figure: The Feedback Mechanism**



Source: Author.

<sup>1</sup> Typically, feedback mechanisms on development activities seek to (i) improve future policies, strategies, programs, and projects, including their design, implementation, and results, through feedback of lessons learned; (ii) provide a basis for accountability, including the provision of information to the public; and (iii) facilitate the updating or reformulation of current project design to increase the implementability and sustainability of the project.

<sup>2</sup> The primary questions of monitoring are: (i) Are the right inputs being supplied or delivered at the right time? (ii) Are the planned inputs producing the planned outputs? (iii) Are the outputs leading to the achievement of the desired outcome? (iv) Is the policy environment consistent with the design assumptions? (v) Are the project's or program's objectives still valid?





simple indicators that can be collected and processed in time for senior management to take the necessary actions. Evaluation,<sup>3</sup> in the context of project implementation, is an ongoing activity used to reassess components necessary to meet objectives in the light of experience as implementation proceeds. Evaluation draws on information supplied through monitoring, as well as special studies to reconsider and adjust project components as required through such mechanisms as reformulation. As a tool, evaluation can be applied at different points in the project cycle to elicit information for project identification and, subsequently, project design; for ongoing management (monitoring and reviews); or for future development activities (post-evaluation studies). Monitoring and evaluation mechanisms should be timely, accessible, simple, ongoing, and systematic. They should also offer a variety of approaches and promote follow-up.

## THE CHALLENGE

The challenge of feedback is to develop ways for the results of monitoring and evaluation to be disseminated and returned through the system to relevant individuals and groups. Thus, feedback mechanisms require information dissemination strategies and formal mechanisms that ensure integration of findings into the project cycle. Institutionalization of the feedback loop facilitates this process. This involves establishing a variety of formal and less formal means that can be used to ensure that findings are considered during project or program implementation and in the development of new projects or programs. Typically, these include linkages to

- senior management,
- policy development,
- program management,
- agency procedures, and
- training.

## COMMON CONSTRAINTS

Constraints on feedback mechanisms are many. They include

- poor appreciation of the benefits from feedback, and thus poor cooperation in its conduct;
- insufficient clarity and precision in performance indicators;
- shortages of personnel with skills in performance evaluation and confidence in its effectiveness;
- overemphasis on official or regulatory procedural aspects, which often means that more attention is given to accomplishing a necessary task than to looking beyond immediate requirements to the needs of current and future projects and programs;
- inadequate financial resources;
- the poor quality of information generated;

- the absence of well-established management information systems; and
- lack of a truthful environment in certain political cultures.

## MONTHLY PROGRESS NOTES

Monthly progress notes on project administration should be considered an essential feedback mechanism. They document accomplishments, as well as the problems or bottlenecks encountered during project or program preparation and implementation, and assess alternate means of replicating or dealing with them, respectively. They are also a means of establishing accountability for various actions at various stages of the project cycle, and assessing the budgetary implications of improving development effectiveness. Yet, the submission of monthly progress notes on activities and accomplishments is too infrequently provided in the scope of projects and programs.

## TEMPLATE

The text and tables below provide guidance on the preparation by consultants of monthly progress notes in the form of a recommended format and a description of the contents required. Naturally, flexibility in the interpretation and use of the instructions should be exercised as they are intended to introduce approximate conformance in the more obvious components of reporting. The monthly progress notes, completed at the end of each month or partial month, should be submitted by consultants to their direct supervisor(s), e.g., the project implementation office head, department director, and project director, and entered into the central files of executing and implementing agencies. Consultants may wish to copy other personnel as well.

The monthly progress notes should serve the function of monitoring and evaluation and purport to inform others in the interest of coordination. They should be concise statements of work accomplished or shortcomings during the preceding month. They should consist of a few pages of text followed by attachments, including (i) details of daily work output in a calendar format, and (ii) a summary of output against terms of reference. Other attachments may be added to clarify aspects of activities.

Needless to say, the body text of the monthly progress note should vary depending on the amount of information that needs to be reported. It may consist of a few paragraphs that summarize the work output or may include separate sections that provide additional information on activities undertaken. In either case the note should contain a section that summarizes the actions taken during the month on the previous month's recommendations. Any other information should be shown as additional attachments. ■

<sup>3</sup> The primary questions of evaluation are: (i) Were the commitments honored from all sides? Did the planned activities actually occur? (ii) What should have been planned (rather than what was actually planned) to reach the project's objectives more effectively and efficiently? (iii) What could have been achieved with the same resources and in the same time if the project or program had been managed more effectively and efficiently?

**Text: Monthly Progress Note**

[Month] [Year]

To: [Primary recipients—LIST]  
 From: [Name], [Position]  
 Copy: [Secondary Recipients—LIST]

---

**Introduction**

The opening paragraph should describe the period covered by the note, and indicate whether the consultant was present on the project full or part time. It should also reference any attachments to the progress note that are used to provide additional details on the consultant's work. There are generally two: the first attachment provides a calendar review of activities for the month; the second provides a brief synopsis of activities against the consultant's terms of reference. Other attachments, added as necessary, should be referenced here.

**General**

This should be a brief summary list of the major categories of work over the past month. Further details on these topics should be provided in later sections.

**Actions Taken in Response to the Recommendations of the Previous Monthly Progress Note**

Recommendations from the previous Monthly Progress Note should be presented in italics, followed by a summary of actions taken over the past month to address the recommendations.

*[Summary of First Recommendation in italics]*

[Summary of actions taken]

*[Summary of Second Recommendation, etc.]*

[Summary of actions taken against second recommendation, etc.]

**[Activity Category 1]**

These sections (as many as needed) should address in some detail individual activities as identified in the section labeled "General" above. A description of the activities and their importance can be described in one or more paragraphs here. Examples of categories include "Purchasing," "Work Planning," "Project Coordination," and "Meetings and Reports."

*Recommendation: Any recommendations for future redirection of activity can be provided here.*

**[Activity Category 2—N]**

This paragraph addresses in the same fashion the second category. Additional sections should be added as needed (up to "N").

*Recommendation: This paragraph provides any relevant recommendations for the second category.*

**[Overarching Category]**

For most consultants there may be one category that overarches all others, and is the primary focus of the consultant's work. If so, activities under this category can be described here and used to sum up and integrate all the consultant's activities for the month.

*Recommendation: General, overarching recommendations may be offered here.*

Signed:

[The note should be signed, at least in hard copy]

---

[Name], [Title]

Source: Author.



Table 1: Schedule of Daily Activities—[Month, Year]

[Month] [Year]						
<i>Sun</i>	<i>Mon</i>	<i>Tue</i>	<i>Wed</i>	<i>Thu</i>	<i>Fri</i>	<i>Sat</i>
A form such as this can be used to show daily activities. It should be filled out each day of the month.	Type in the day's activities, e.g., "Met with PIO Head. Prepared monthly progress note," etc.	1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

Source: Author.

**Table 2: Terms of Reference and Monthly Summary of Activities—[Month, Year]**

Item	Terms of Reference	Monthly Summary of Activities
1.	[List items in terms of reference here.]	[Describe activities undertaken during the month against items in the consultant's terms of reference]
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		
6.		
7.		
8.		
9.		
10.		

[Note: Variations on the style and layout of this table are acceptable.]

Source: Author.

## FURTHER READING

ADB. 1995. *Project Quality: An Agenda for Action*. Manila.



### KNOWLEDGE CAPTURE AND STORAGE

Knowledge leaks in various ways at various times.



# Showcasing Knowledge

Information has become ubiquitous because producing, manipulating, and disseminating it is now cheap and easy. But perceptions of information overload have less to do with quantity than with the qualities by which knowledge is presented.



## THE GREAT INFORMATION GLUT

In the 21st century, the digital world provides a myriad means of communication. Distance, speed, and time no longer hold the importance they once did. Each day and night feed a growing flow.<sup>1</sup> Are today's (and tomorrow's) technologies leading to information overload<sup>2</sup> in a variety of formats? Information has become ubiquitous because producing, manipulating, and disseminating it is now cheap and easy.

But is more information necessarily good? A few responses follow. First, although we may be becoming better at capturing and storing information, there are processing limitations. (Observation suggests that "attention economy" emerges naturally from information overload.) Second, in reaction to the overabundance of views, we may avoid drawing conclusions. Third, with the increase in channels of information, people seem to have abandoned storytelling, that age-old technique that every society used to educate, entertain, and preserve culture; and to instill moral values. Fourth, without knowing the validity of content, we run the risk of misinformation. Fifth, are important discoveries,

accomplishments, or initiatives being missed because vital papers are buried among others?

Denis Diderot (1713–1784), a French philosopher, art critic, and writer, mused about the information explosion in 1775.<sup>3</sup> Inevitably, the difficult concept of information overload will continuously rewrite its history. But some things will never change: in the 21st century, much as in the years that followed the invention of the mechanical printing press,<sup>4</sup> exploring the critical distinction between information and knowledge remains the most important thing anyone must do.<sup>5</sup>

## CUTTING "INFO-POLLUTION"

Modern organizations are breeding grounds for information overload. (Sometimes, even trivial matters are packaged and marketed as important.) Long messages, especially in writing, overwhelm. Communicators of all types develop armor-piercing measures to attract attention (if not make a lasting impression).

Accountability for cutting "info-pollution" starts at the individual level. We can be smart agents and there are ways to manage our individual signal-to-noise ratios, for example,

<sup>1</sup> Electronic mail is a major source, as people struggle to keep up with the rate of incoming messages, including unsolicited commercial mail. Users must also contend with the growing use of e-mail attachments. (And it does take time to return to work after an e-mail interruption.) In addition, the internet provided access to billions of pages of information: search engines help find information quickly but users must often cross-check what they read before using it for decision making, which takes up more time. More recent, social media such as Facebook and Twitter has grown at an unbelievable rate. (At work, other channels of information include the telephone, of course, instant messaging, and Really Simple Syndication.)

<sup>2</sup> Forty years ago, Alvin Toffler conjectured that the human brain can only absorb and process so much information. Past that theoretical limit, it becomes overloaded: thinking and reasoning become dulled; decision making becomes flawed and, in some instances, impossible. He suggested that this could lead to widespread physical and mental disturbances. See Alvin Toffler. 1970. *Future Shock*. Random House.

<sup>3</sup> Denis Diderot was a prominent figure of the Enlightenment. He is best known for serving as chief editor of and contributor of the *Encyclopédie*, which he helped create.

<sup>4</sup> Johann Gutenberg (c. 1398–1468), a German goldsmith and entrepreneur, invented a mechanical printing press with movable type in 1436 (completed by 1440). This revolutionized the production of books and fostered rapid development in the sciences, arts, and religion through the transmission of texts.

<sup>5</sup> Data are discrete and objective facts, measurements, or observations that can be analyzed to generate information. Information is data that have been categorized, analyzed, summarized, and placed in context in a form that has structure and meaning. Knowledge is a combination of data and information, to which is added expert opinion, skills, and experience, resulting in a valuable asset that aids decision making.

“As long as the centuries continue to unfold, the number of books will grow continually, and one can predict that a time will come when it will be almost as difficult to learn anything from books as from the direct study of the whole universe. It will be almost as convenient to search for some bit of truth concealed in nature as it will be to find it hidden away in an immense multitude of bound volumes.”

—Denis Diderot

by not carbon-copying electronic mail to all. But, as primary sources of information smog, organizations should explore ways to contribute, too.<sup>6</sup> They might formulate strategies to eliminate duplication or exchange of unnecessary information. (Some argue that the issue is not information overload but filter failure. Others see information overload as organization underload.) Technological solutions that organizations might introduce promise relief. For instance, software can automatically sort and prioritize incoming electronic mail to regulate or divert the deluge. Importantly, nontechnological solutions may need to help people change the way they think and behave when communicating.

## SHOWCASING KNOWLEDGE

Then again, given our propensity for attention economy, is it possible that perceptions of information overload have less to

do with the quantity of information in production or circulation at any time than with the qualities by which knowledge is presented? Might the biggest drain on our time simply be ineffective communication? For sure, there will always be demand for good knowledge products. Yet, paradoxically, authors often do not begin to understand how to disseminate these well.

Dissemination of knowledge is just as important as its production. High-performance organizations (i) adopt a strategic approach to dissemination; (ii) know their target audiences; (iii) formulate generic, viable dissemination strategies that can be amended to suit different purposes; (iv) hit the target; and (v) monitor and evaluate their accomplishments. Good marketing is essential to this and information sheets are a key element of effective outreach. In a crowded marketplace, a concise well-written summary and its calibrated dissemination will allow readers to easily gain information and understanding that is found more deeply in the document summarized. Knowledge that is available but not summarized might just as well be lost.

Each organization needs to come up with a solution that works within its own culture. These *Knowledge Solutions* advertise a series of one-pagers, the *Knowledge Showcase*,<sup>7</sup> that the Asian Development Bank introduced to record, store, and share cornerstone information about the success of specific tools, methods, and approaches to problems and challenges; cut “info-pollution;” and generate and share knowledge. ■

### Box: Guidelines for Drafting Knowledge Showcases

**Purpose.** The *Knowledge Showcase* series highlights innovative ideas from ADB technical assistance and other knowledge products. It seeks to foster discussion and research, perhaps even encourage replication. Rather than summaries of ADB (and other) reports, a *Knowledge Showcase* focuses on the crux of a discussion and refers readers to other sources, whenever possible, to deepen understanding.

**Audiences.** Target audiences include the governments of ADB’s developing member countries; its Board of Directors, Management, senior staff, staff in headquarters, resident missions, and representative offices; knowledge management centers in developing member countries, such as universities and research institutes, local stakeholders, nongovernment organizations, and other development agencies.

Writers for the *Knowledge Showcase* should consider the following questions:

- Who are my readers? What unites them?
- Why should they care about what I am writing?
- What reaction am I looking to provoke in my readers?

- How might my readers change their behavior based on what I have written?

**Source Material.** *Knowledge Showcases* may be prepared for strategic knowledge products generated under technical assistance and nontechnical assistance—funded means, such as staff work and staff consultancies.

“It is with words as with sunbeams. The more they are condensed, the deeper they burn.”

—Robert Southey

**Contents.** *Knowledge Showcases* present the “essence of the solution” to problems or challenges addressed by the technical assistance, project, or study. They emphasize tools, methods, and approaches used to resolve these. The topics may include the project design, assistance mode, consultation with stakeholders, reliance on indigenous skills, and other aspects that made the

*continued on next page*

<sup>6</sup> The Information Overload Research Group at [www.iorgforum.org/index.htm](http://www.iorgforum.org/index.htm) works to understand, publicize, and solve the information overload problem.

<sup>7</sup> ADB. 2008. *Knowledge Showcases*. Manila. Available: [www.adb.org/documents/information/knowledge-showcase/default.asp](http://www.adb.org/documents/information/knowledge-showcase/default.asp)



Box continued

technical assistance, project, or study unique. Solutions to problems or challenges must be evident in the content.

**Format.** The format of the outreach is readily available multimedia (online and hard copy). Soft copies will be available online on ADB's website and departmental intranets. Hard copies can be made available to target audiences as needed.

**Title.** Contributors should select succinct, catchy titles that attract readers' attention without revealing too much of the main message. The shorter the title, the better.

**Text.** The main text should be 500–800 words couched in two columns over two pages. Graphs, tables, or photographs should be included. A graphic should occupy not more than 20 lines of one column. The one-pager will also contain standard language about ADB, the purpose of the *Knowledge Showcase* series, the author, contact information, and links to cited materials on ADB's website.

**Structure.** The main text should be structured as follows:

- Main points—up to four bullet points that summarize key messages;
- Introduction or background—a paragraph or two describing the basis, rationale, stakeholders, and beneficiaries of the technical assistance, project, or study;
- Problems or challenges—a discussion of the obstacles experienced by the stakeholders and/or project implementers, which may include feelings associated with these obstacles;
- Analysis—arguments and/or key findings that discuss the actions taken; the time and place markers related to the actions taken; the main turning points, outcomes, and impacts as supported by facts, figures, images, and vivid language; and
- Conclusions or recommendations—a summary of how things turned out; the endings; the learning that outcomes and impacts presented; and/or recommendations for replication of the tools, methods, and approaches used to resolve the problems or challenges.

Beginning the text with bullets on main points (matched to color-coded sentences in the main text) helps the reader navigate from principal arguments to details. The first sentence of key paragraphs is in bold (color-coded to the bullet points at the top). A note at the end of the first page refers readers to the Uniform Resource Locator (web link) of the source document, where available, and the e-mail

Source: Author.

**“A sentence should contain no unnecessary words, a paragraph no unnecessary sentences, for the same reason that a drawing should have no unnecessary lines and a machine no unnecessary parts.”**

—William Strunk

address of the author of the *Knowledge Showcase*. Technical notes for information that cannot be accommodated on the first page can be included on the second page. Standard information about ADB is presented at the bottom of the second page.

**Style.** Writers should (i) start and finish strong, i.e., attract and maintain the attention of readers and generate interest in the knowledge product associated with the *Knowledge Showcase*; (ii) keep sentences short; (iii) avoid unnecessary words; (iv) select active verbs; and (v) use concrete language. The use of hyperlinks, which can connect documents (or elements thereof) to others, is recommended. Hyperlinks are an essential ingredient of all hypertext systems, including the internet.

**References.** The *Knowledge Showcase* can include bibliographic references, for which URLs should be provided.

**Approval.** In consultation with the office or department's Knowledge Management Unit (or designated equivalent), the proponent should submit the draft *Knowledge Showcase* to his/her supervisor for approval following intradepartmental and, as necessary, interdepartmental peer review with other relevant knowledge departments, such as the Asian Development Bank Institute, the Economics and Research Department, the Office of Regional Economic Integration, and the Regional and Sustainable Development Department. Following approval, the draft and associated metadata should be submitted to the Regional and Sustainable Development Department (focal point Olivier Serrat) for review. The Department of External Relations will copyedit and lay out the draft and return it to the author for final approval.

**Dissemination.** ADB's website and *ADB Today* are primary dissemination tools. An external *Knowledge Showcases* blogsite is at <http://knowledgeshowcase.blogspot.com/>. Printed copies can be circulated to the targeted audiences on a selective basis.

## FURTHER READING

ADB. 2006. *Evaluation News*. Manila. Available: [www.adb.org/evaluation/reports.asp?s=1&type=20](http://www.adb.org/evaluation/reports.asp?s=1&type=20)

———. 2007. *Learning Curves*. Manila. Available: [www.adb.org/evaluation/reports.asp?s=1&type=15](http://www.adb.org/evaluation/reports.asp?s=1&type=15)

———. 2008. *Knowledge Showcase*. Manila. Available: [www.adb.org/documents/information/knowledge-showcase/default.asp](http://www.adb.org/documents/information/knowledge-showcase/default.asp)







# Staff Profile Pages

Staff profile pages are dynamic, adaptive electronic directories that store information about the knowledge, skills, experience, and interests of people. They are a cornerstone of successful knowledge management and learning initiatives.



## RATIONALE

A determinant of organizational performance is the ability to leverage expert knowledge. Much of that is tacit and, therefore, difficult to capture, codify, and make available through search engines and database technologies. And so, when looking for quick, reliable information we usually turn to people we know. (Chance conversations can help, too.) However, in the global economy, personal networks are no longer sufficiently diverse to identify all the right persons, much as reliance on random connections is a thing of the past. Staff directories are no longer adequate to the task:<sup>1</sup> learning organizations thrive on rich and fluid linkages and need expertise location capabilities to put people in contact with one another.

## DEFINITION

Staff profile pages<sup>2</sup> are electronic tools that locate knowledge and expertise in an organization. Their purpose is to enable conversations that facilitate the emergence of rich communities of practice (or interest) in and across sector or thematic groups. In the process, especially if they can be linked with the knowledge resources that an individual has contributed, they create context-rich knowledge assets.

## BENEFITS

Staff profile pages are technologically simple and quite effective in helping organizations know what they know. They allow people to find the tacit knowledge they need by making it easy

to find those who hold it, and can also underpin corporate initiatives for collaboration, knowledge sharing and learning, and knowledge capture and storage. Naturally, they are particularly beneficial to large organizations that have offices in different locations.

## BUILDING DYNAMIC PAGES

Staff profile pages that connect people to generate conversations can only be voluntary and must therefore encourage personal ownership and maintenance. To build dynamic pages

- (i) Preserve a balance between the discipline of restrictive formats and the chaos of not having a format. This calls for a delicate mix of formal and informal content<sup>3</sup> and templates that individuals can use to customize, create, and update their entries are popular. Fixed terms or options for some fields may be appropriate. Multiple versions of uploaded biodata should be allowed.
- (ii) Ensure that the design is inclusive, embedded in people processes, and connects to sector and thematic networks in the organization. By helping forge communities of practice (or interest), it is possible to identify champions and promote use.
- (iii) Maximize the attractiveness of the platform with multi-media that relates to the expertise advertised.
- (iv) Turn the pages into a smart system. However, powerful staff profile pages are in themselves, they still force staff to seek answers. Also, staff have no means to know

<sup>1</sup> Staff directories list names, job titles, departments, and contact details. Typically, they are NOT linked to knowledge resources/connected to sector or thematic communities/searchable, attractive, lively, or championed by managers. What is worse, their more advanced versions are often mistakenly linked to skills assessment and evaluative systems. Consequently, they encourage people to overstate their skills or conversely discourage them from populating the database.

<sup>2</sup> The term is taken here to equate with "white pages," experts' directories, expertise directories, skills directories, and capabilities catalogues.

<sup>3</sup> Staff profile pages will help people find others but the chances that they will actually act on the information and contact a person will be greater if they feel they "know" them. Familiarity can be promoted by including some personal information, e.g., hobbies, interests, holidays, etc., and avoiding sterile passport-style photographs in people's entries.



## Staff Profile Page Template

**Photograph:**

**Name:**

**Job Title:**

**Department and Division:**

**Contact Details:**

**Expertise:** Fast facts (2 paragraphs) covering

Areas of knowledge or expertise (selected from a predefined list of themes; staff should record extensive knowledge only)

Sectors and countries of experience (selected from a predefined list of sectors; staff should record extensive experience only)

**Education and Professional Qualifications:**

**Affiliations:**

**Biography:** Fast facts (2–3 paragraphs) covering

Work experience (employment history)

Current job description

Main areas of interest (memberships in communities of practice, working groups, knowledge networks, etc.)

Languages spoken (staff should rank their ability, e.g., “good,” “fair,” “slight”)

Recent work

Current studies

Previous involvements

**Publications:**

Books

Monographs, journal articles

Magazines, newspapers, and selected less formal publications

Selected unpublished items

Selected speeches

Contributions to compilations/edited volumes/other published work

Multimedia

Blogs/blog posts

**Biodata:** (multiple versions)

Source: Author.

if someone else is investigating the same subject, thereby missing the opportunity to pool resources and avoid duplication of effort: adaptive staff profile pages that learn as they are used enhance an organization's ability to identify, create, store, share, and use knowledge.

- (v) Add further value to the staff profile pages by linking them to the other knowledge management tools that might be available on an intranet or internet, such as good practice notes, and vice versa.

## OTHERS

Of course, any electronic directory must be marketed internally to encourage participation and senior staff should sponsor the rollout. Guidelines and training that encourage staff to use the pages and add entries are necessary, too. Lastly, it is also necessary to track use and measure that effectively to continuously promote staff profile pages across the organization. ■



### KNOWLEDGE CAPTURE AND STORAGE

Knowledge leaks in various ways at various times.



# Writing Web Logs\*

A web log, in its various forms, is a web-based application on which dated entries of commentary, descriptions of events, or other material such as graphics or video are posted. A web log enables groups of people to discuss electronically areas of interest and to review different opinions and information surrounding a topic.



## BACKGROUND

Electronic communications were one of the first expressions of networked computing.<sup>1</sup> They were developed to enable individuals, groups, organizations, and related systems to collaborate on documents, regardless of their respective physical locations.

However, until recent times, posting content on networks was a task that only technology-savvy persons could perform. It required skills in navigating directories and coding HyperText Markup Language (HTML). But, web logs (blogs)<sup>2</sup> of various types are now relatively easy to set up and maintain and have become a ubiquitous feature of the internet.<sup>3</sup> (In December 2007, the Technorati blog search engine was tracking about 112 million blogs.) As a result, they are redefining collaboration and knowledge capture and storage among digital communities to great effect. Increasingly, they allow the creation of networks of practice (or communities of interest) based on the particular topic discussed.<sup>4</sup>

## DEFINITION

Blogs are websites. Typically, they are written, edited, and maintained by individuals acting in their own capacity, as subject matter specialists, or on behalf of organizations. (Some are written by multiple contributors after editor approval.) They share common features with journals: they are published on a regular basis, e.g., daily, weekly, or monthly; they have subscription mechanisms;<sup>5</sup> and they undergo review.<sup>6</sup> Elsewhere, they differ substantially, too: unlike journals, blogs can evolve

in a matter of seconds—authors have the means to respond to reader comments and update entries as required; while journals are typically produced by scientific or academic communities, blogs do not have clear-cut parameters; also, there are no set criteria for writing blogs as they are considered a vehicle for personal expression. (Increasingly, however, they are also being used to break, shape, and spin news stories.)

## FEATURES

Needless to say, the format of a blog should match the purpose for which it is intended. This has implications for the features it should rest on, or advertise. Even so, the common features of blogs are

- Text—Most blogs are primarily textual, although some focus on art, sketches, photographs, video clips, music, and podcasts.
- Tags—Posts are classified into subject areas and subtopics.
- Reverse chronological order—New posts are found at the top of the page.
- Comments—Readers can react to a post, and discuss it with the author and other interested parties.
- Links—A typical blog offers links to other blogs, web pages, and other media related to its primary topic.
- Archives—A searchable database of previous posts.
- RSS feed—RSS enables visitors to subscribe to a blog and know what is new without having to visit the site itself.
- Permalinks—It is important that links not be lost. Many sites archive older entries and generate a permalink for individual entries.<sup>7</sup>

\* Norman Lu contributed to these *Knowledge Solutions*.

<sup>1</sup> Others are electronic mail, bulletin board systems, message boards, and hypertext.

<sup>2</sup> The term “weblog” was coined by Jorn Barger in 1997 to describe the process of logging the web. The short form, “blog,” was coined by Peter Merholz in 1999.

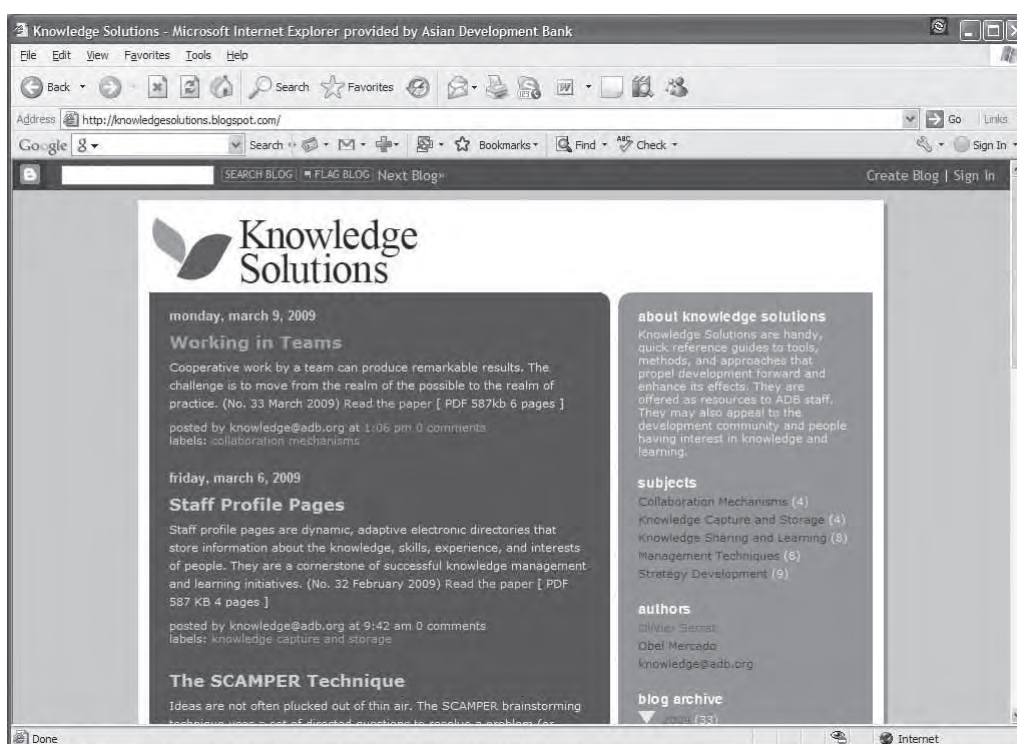
<sup>3</sup> Many portals offer free tools for bloggers and space to host blogs.

<sup>4</sup> Not surprisingly, given their use for social networking, research reveals that blogs become popular through citation and affiliation.

<sup>5</sup> Unlike journals, they rely on Really Simple Syndication (RSS) to push new content to subscribers.

<sup>6</sup> Unlike journals, which are reviewed by peers or external referees, blogs do not have formal review process. But, they receive critical inputs through the feedback (comments) feature most incorporate (but can still be vetted).

<sup>7</sup> A permalink is a Uniform Resource Locator designed to refer to a specific information item and to remain unchanged permanently (or at least for a lengthy period of time).



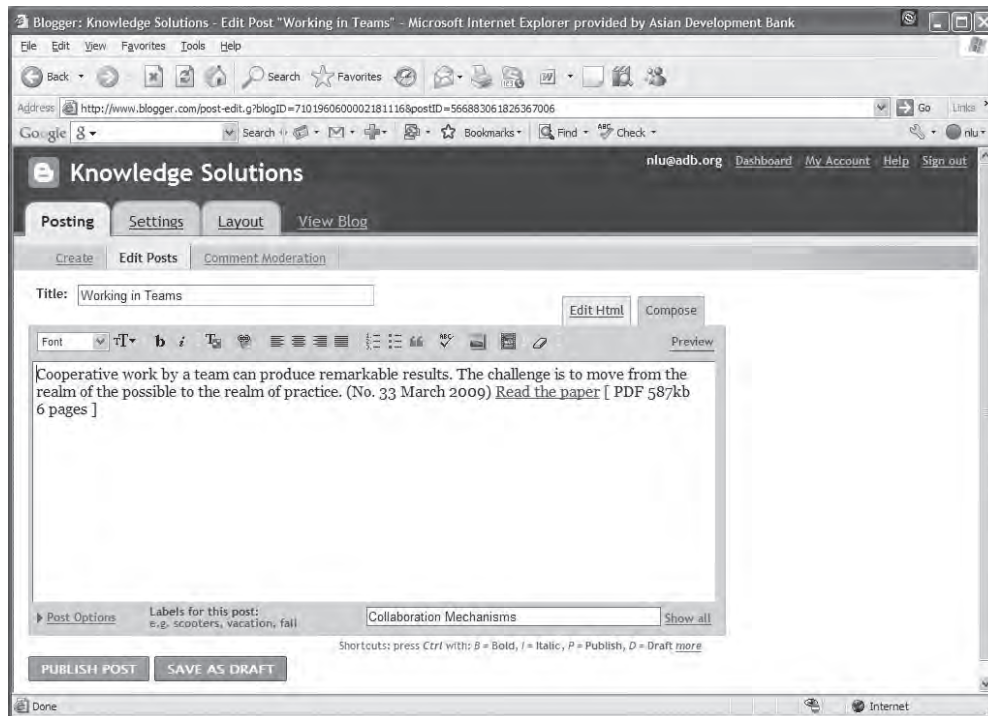
Source: Knowledge Solutions Blog. 2010. Available: <http://knowledgesolutions.blogspot.com/>

## WRITING A BLOG

In the age of “push-button publishing” (a term used to denote the ease with which one can create, write, and maintain a blog) anybody can have a fully functional platform in 30 minutes or less. While there are no hard-and-fast rules, authors should observe a few basic guidelines:

- **Write as you talk.** Blogging is a conversation. The message should be clear and easy to understand. Use plain English to start a discussion and engage readers. They will respond if they are interested. This is an opportunity for mutual enrichment.
- **Stay on topic.** The majority of readers are interested in content that centers on a specific theme. If the content of all posts relate to it authors will create a loyal following.
- **Label posts.** Each post must be filed under a specific category or subject. This makes it easier for readers to find related posts.
- **Use keywords.** If the goal of the blog is to increase visibility, the title of the blog should include related keywords. The title should be no longer than half a dozen words.
- **RSS.** RSS will increase readership and distribution and extend a blog’s reach.
- **Old news is not news.** Blogging each day can be a drain, but it is important that the information presented be current, informative, and accurate.
- **Adhere to a schedule.** Blogs and RSS feeds are created on a daily basis. Realizing that blogging requires time and effort, authors should not create unrealistic expectations. Still, search engines spider pages at regular intervals and frequent update of blog content will raise profile.
- **Create links.** Linking to other blogs also raises profile. (These should relate to similar subject areas.) Search engines use links as a means to validate blogs, which raises their profiles in search results.<sup>8</sup>
- **Use media whenever appropriate.** Many blogs offer capabilities to add photographs and video clips. However, if several media files relate to a post, consider placing them elsewhere, for example on media sharing sites such as Flickr. Blogs that are saddled with large files rapidly become unusable.
- **Look up to peers and readers.** Bloggers are internet users. Paying respect to their views will enhance the relevance and credibility of posts. Blogs are easy to set up, but they can taken down with speed if authors do not treat their audiences well.
- **Recognize intellectual property.** On the internet, citing sources is easier, especially if these are already available online. An embedded reference that provides a hyperlink is usually sufficient for citation purposes. ■

<sup>8</sup> Aside from metadata, search engines use the number of referencing links to weigh up a site’s relevance to search terms. For instance, if several websites link to a particular blog on aquaculture, search engines will accept that as a validation of the blog’s content and assign to it a higher rating in search results for queries on aquaculture.



Source: Knowledge Solutions Blog. 2010. Available: <http://knowledgesolutions.blogspot.com/>



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# Keys for Reflection

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## STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT

### Behavior and Change

• How can a strategy focus on group relationships with appreciation of their distinctive ideas, beliefs, values, and knowledge?	• Culture Theory	14
• How can it utilize stories of significant change to monitor and evaluate performance?	• The Most Significant Change Technique	60
• How might it shift the focus from changes in state to changes in behaviors, relationships, actions, and activities?	• Outcome Mapping	63
• How could you anchor it in understanding of livelihoods and appreciation of the factors that constrain or enhance these as well as their relationships?	• The Sustainable Livelihoods Approach	80

### Emergence and Scenario Thinking

• Is your strategy the outcome of a human-centered, prototype-driven process for the exploration of new ideas?	• Design Thinking	16
• Does it maintain a balance between strategizing and learning modes of thinking?	• From Strategy to Practice	30
• How emergent is it? Does it consider other scenarios?	• Reading the Future	75

### Institutional Capacity and Participation

• How does a strategy promote participation at requisite levels?	• Building Institutional Capacity for Development	10
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### Knowledge Assets

• Is your strategy for knowledge management enriched by regular knowledge audits?	• Auditing Knowledge	1
• Does its practice integrate the need to systematically review, evaluate, prioritize, sequence, manage, redirect, and if necessary even cancel strategic initiatives?	• Enhancing Knowledge Management Strategies	21
• Is your approach to dissemination underpinned by policy, strategy, planning, and tactics? How can your knowledge products be made available in a flexible range of formats in recognition of the varied needs of consumers?	• Linking Research to Practice	52

### Marketing

• How does a strategy apply a custom blend of the four Ps and other marketing techniques to transform communications with stakeholders and improve performance?	• The Future of Social Marketing	32
• How might it draw on marketing principles to effect changes in the behavior of individuals or groups?	• Marketing in the Public Sector	55



## Organizational Learning

• How can a strategy support and energize organization, people, knowledge, and technology for learning?	• Building a Learning Organization	4
• How might it integrate evaluation results to support policy, strategy, and operational changes?	• Learning Lessons with Knowledge Audits	40
• How could it distinguish roadblocks to make them part of the solution instead of part of the problem?	• Overcoming Roadblocks to Learning	67

## Partnerships and Networks of Practice

• Does your strategy leverage partnerships and recognize their drivers of success and failure?	• Creating and Running Partnerships	12
• How might it make out social networks and analyze the actors and the relationships between them?	• Social Network Analysis	77

## MANAGEMENT TECHNIQUES

### Branding and Value

• How might we embrace branding to drive organizational behavior and behavioral change?	• New-Age Branding and the Public Sector	109
• Do value cycles maximize the potential of knowledge services and knowledge solutions through delivery platforms?	• Value Cycles for Development Outcomes	181

### Complexity and Lateral Thinking

• How might we investigate deeply the cause-and-effect relationships underlying problems?	• The Five Whys Technique	99
• Do you enable different perspectives to be generated and applied in management processes?	• The Reframing Matrix	151
• How might one brainstorm to resolve a problem, meet an opportunity, or turn a tired idea into something new and different?	• The SCAMPER Technique	155
• Why should management practices encompass sense and decision making in multiple contexts?	• Understanding Complexity	175

### Linear Thinking

• How can we manage for results with a coherent framework for strategic planning, management, and communications?	• Crafting a Knowledge Management Results Framework	86
• How does one focus on time, cost, human resources, scope, quality, and actions as common parameters of project performance?	• Focusing on Project Metrics	102
• Do you make use of logic models for objectives-oriented planning that structures the main elements in a project, highlighting linkages between intended inputs, planned activities, and expected results?	• Output Accomplishment and the Design and Monitoring Framework	123
• What are some pernicious effects of performance measurement and how might one improve the state of the art?	• The Perils of Performance Measurement	125

## Organizational Change

• How do organizations overcome resistance to change and secure as much discretionary effort as possible?	• Fast and Effective Change Management	95
• How do we get the right knowledge to the right people at the right time, and help them (with incentives) to apply it in ways that strive to improve organizational performance?	• Notions of Knowledge Management	113
• How might you prioritize investments in knowledge management?	• Picking Investments in Knowledge Management	131
• What are the components of organizational culture and what is the role of organizational learning for change?	• A Primer on Organizational Culture	137
• How do organizations learn?	• A Primer on Organizational Learning	139
• How do new knowledge management paradigms compare with the old, and what new structures and managerial attitudes do they require?	• The Roots of an Emerging Discipline	153
• Why should we drive management innovation?	• Sparking Innovations in Management	163

## Talent Management

• Do you manage meetings before, during, and after, with appreciation of their different kinds, to make them productive and fun?	• Conducting Effective Meetings	83
• Should one spend more time, integrity, and brainpower on selecting managers than on anything else?	• Growing Managers, Not Bosses	103
• Why should you empower knowledge workers to make the most of their deepest skills and perform best?	• Managing Knowledge Workers	107
• How does one manage by walking around to emphasize the importance of interpersonal contact, open appreciation, and recognition and build civility and performance in the workplace?	• Managing by Walking Around	105
• How can one give talent strategic and holistic attention to make it happen?	• A Primer on Talent Management	144
• Do you have the ability, capacity, skill, or self-perceived ability to identify, assess, and manage the emotions of yourself, of others, and of groups?	• Understanding and Developing Emotional Intelligence	168

## COLLABORATION MECHANISMS

### Collaborative Tools

• How do you harness the power of collaborative minds to innovate faster, cocreate, and cut costs?	• Collaborating with Wikis	199
• How does one represent, link, and arrange concepts, themes, or tasks under a central topic?	• Drawing Mind Maps	208
• How can we actualize the thinking potential of teams?	• Wearing Six Thinking Hats	269

### Communities of Practice and Learning Alliances

• How do you build a community of like-minded, interacting people to ensure more effective creation and sharing of knowledge in a domain?	• Building Communities of Practice	192
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• How can communities of practice report better?	• Improving Sector and Thematic Reporting	216
• Why should strategic alliances manage the partnership, not just the agreement, for collaborative advantage?	• Learning in Strategic Alliances	243
• How does social neuroscience foster more comprehensive theories of the mechanisms that underlie human behavior?	• A Primer on Social Neuroscience	258

### Leadership

• How should we earn, develop, and retain trust for superior results?	• Building Trust in the Workplace	196
• How can one distribute leadership if it is an outcome, not an input to business processes and performance?	• Distributing Leadership	202
• Why would you support people who choose to serve first, and then lead, as a way of expanding service to individuals and organizations?	• Exercising Servant Leadership	212
• What is the new context for leadership in the public sector?	• Leading in the Workplace	237

### Social Innovations

• By what process can one unearth what works to facilitate positive change in organizations?	• Appreciative Inquiry	186
• How can you generate good ideas that meet pressing unmet needs and improve people's lives to foster smart, sustainable globalization?	• Sparking Social Innovations	263

### Teamwork

• How do you enable small groups to work regularly and collectively on complicated problems, take action, and learn as individuals and as a team while doing so?	• Action Learning	183
• How might one bridge silos to promote effective cross-functional teams?	• Bridging Organizational Silos	188
• How can reciprocity intensify mutual influence in organizations?	• Informal Authority in the Workplace	232
• How can we organize and coordinate with effect a group whose members are not in the same location or time zone, and may not even work for the same organization?	• Managing Virtual Teams	249
• What role can corporate values play in guiding behavior and decision-making?	• A Primer on Corporate Values	253
• How does one develop a successful team?	• Working in Teams	273

## KNOWLEDGE SHARING AND LEARNING

### Creativity, Innovation, and Learning

• What are the forms and functions of networks of practice and how do you monitor and evaluate performance?	• Building Networks of Practice	281
• How do you harness, individually or in association, useful models of learning and change to reflect on the dimensions of a learning organization?	• Dimensions of the Learning Organization	307

• How can an organization demonstrate commitment to learning, against which provision and practice can be tested and serve as a waymark with which to guide, monitor, and evaluate progress?	• <b>Drawing Learning Charters</b>	319
• What are the stimulants and obstacles to creativity and innovation that drive or impede enterprise in organizations?	• <b>Harnessing Creativity and Innovation in the Workplace</b>	333
• How can the public sector use Web 2.0 applications to forge, build, and deepen relationships?	• <b>Social Media and the Public Sector</b>	355

### Learning and Development

• How can we coach and mentor to inspire and empower employees, build commitment, increase productivity, grow talent, and promote success?	• <b>Coaching and Mentoring</b>	290
• What are the five functions of managers toward which learning and development can be extended to improve their insights, attitudes, and skills?	• <b>Learning and Development for Management</b>	345

### Learning Lessons

• How do you know what question to ask when?	• <b>Asking Effective Questions</b>	275
• When a critical milestone has been reached, why should we discuss successes and failures in an open and honest fashion?	• <b>Conducting After-Action Reviews and Retrospects</b>	294
• How does one step back from day-to-day activities to think about the future?	• <b>Conducting Successful Retreats</b>	304
• How can individuals come together to share their experiences, insights, and knowledge on an identified challenge or problem?	• <b>Conducting Peer Assists</b>	300
• Is failure a way to an opportunity?	• <b>Embracing Failure</b>	323
• How can one suggest that a process or methodology that has been shown to be effective in one part of an organization and might be effective in another too?	• <b>Identifying and Sharing Good Practices</b>	343
• How might evaluation serve as a foundation block in learning organizations?	• <b>Learning from Evaluation</b>	347
• What is the potential of stories or narratives as a communication tool to value, share, and capitalize on the knowledge of individuals?	• <b>Storytelling</b>	361

### Dissemination

• How can an ordinary presentation become a lively and engaging event?	• <b>Conducting Effective Presentations</b>	297
• By what interactive process does one communicate knowledge to target audiences to lead to change?	• <b>Disseminating Knowledge Products</b>	314
• How can we enrich the definition, design, and implementation of policy research?	• <b>Enriching Policy with Research</b>	327
• How do you employ the internet to disseminate research findings?	• <b>Posting Research Online</b>	353
• How do we save time in writing, make writing far easier, and improve understanding?	• <b>Using Plain English</b>	364

## KNOWLEDGE CAPTURE AND STORAGE

### Knowledge Harvesting

• How do you garner feedback on why employees leave, what they liked about their job, and where the organization needs improvement?	• Conducting Exit Interviews	374
• How can the study of critical incidents help solve practical problems?	• The Critical Incident Technique	378
• What, in simple terms, are the most common concepts in knowledge management?	• Glossary of Knowledge Management	382
• How do you draw out and package tacit knowledge to help others adapt, personalize, and apply it; build organizational capacity; and preserve institutional memory?	• Harvesting Knowledge	385
• Why should one cut information overload and showcase knowledge?	• Showcasing Knowledge	394
• How do we build dynamic, adaptive electronic directories that store information about the knowledge, skills, experience, and interests of people?	• Staff Profile Pages	397

### Reporting

• How can one garner feedback from executing agencies on the effectiveness of assistance in capacity development?	• Assessing the Effectiveness of Assistance in Capacity Development	367
• By what simple feedback mechanisms might you promote learning before, during, and after to document accomplishments as well as bottlenecks?	• Monthly Progress Notes	389

### Technology Platforms

• How can groups discuss electronically areas of interest and review different opinions and information surrounding a topic?	• Writing Weblogs	400
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Source: Author.

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